

S I N G I N G
O F
P S A L M E S
T H E
Duty of Christians
Under the
N E W T E S T A M E N T,
O R A
V I N D I C A T I O N
O F T H A T
G o s p e l - O r d i n a n c e
I N
V. S E R M O N S

Upon E P H E S I A N S 5. 19.

Wherein are Asserted and cleared

- | | | |
|---------|---|------------------|
| 1. That | } | we must S I N G. |
| 2. What | | |
| 3. How | | |
| 4. Why | | |

Rⁱ. Old

The second Edition, with many Additions.

By *Tho. Ford*, Minister of the Gospell in EXON.

Jam. 5. 13. *Is any merry? Let him sing Psalms.*

London, Printed by *W. B.* for *F. Eaglesfield*, and are to
be sold at the Marygold in *St. Pauls*.
Church-yard, 1659.

THE LANCET

NOTIFICATION

OF THE

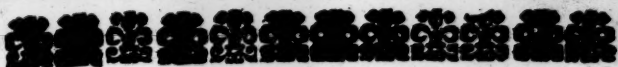
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An Advertisement

Concerning this Second Edition of these
S E R M O N S.

Since there are many, that scruple the singing of David's Psalmes, because they deem them not proper, or pertinent to their particular occasions, and conditions, here are severall instances added to those already mentioned in the foregoing Sermons, to shew them their mistake, and to perswade them, (if the Lord be pleased to set all home upon their hearts) that they may improve all and every of those Psalmes, as occasion serves, by sweet meditation, and stirring up godly affections accordingly, for singular advantage, and spirituall edification in grace, and glorious practice.

Most of those Additions are to be found by themselves, towards the end of the book, beginning with the word Suppose, in Page 137. which was judged the most convenient place for them.



TO THE READER

READER,

IT is confest, and cannot be denied, that as there are already but too many Books in the world, so there are enough written in the Vindication of this Gospel-Ordinance, if men would heed and read them as they ought to do : And this consideration (besides others) so swayed the Author, as no importunity could prevail with him to publish these Sermons till hee was inforc't to it, beyond and against his own opinion and inclination, by others, threatening to Print the Notes (which some had taken in short-hand) though very imperfect. Therefore it is desired, if any fault be, the blame may light on those who are most guilty, the Author at worst being but an accessory. When these Sermons were Preach't, it was

To the Reader.

his desire and prayer to God, that they might be imprinted on the hearts of those that heard them; and it pleased the Lord (let him have all the glory) to second his Desires and Endeavours with a blessing so farre, as some, who have neglected Singing, were convinced; others that were wavering were confirmed; and many better informed in the Nature, End and Use of that Duty, which formerly they little understood or heeded. They were principally intended for the more ignorant (such as the most are who question, or deny the Singing of Davids Psalme) and therefore contriv'd and fram'd with the greatest plainness, so as they might best serve to give understanding unto the simple.

'Tis desired and hoped, that the wiser and more understanding Reader will take no offence at that plainness which was affected and studied for the benefit and edification of a popular Auditory. Truth is never the lesse comely, when she walks abroad in a plain and homely dress. But there needs no Apology, since plain dealing (we use to say) is alwaies best. There are three sorts unto whom these Sermons are more especial-

To the Reader.

especially directed, or (if you will have it so) dedicated.

First, Such as deny singing of Davids Psalms to be a Duty.

Secondly, Such as neglect that Duty very much, especially in private.

Thirdly, Such as do it both in publick and private, yet know not how to carry themselves in it as becometh Christians.

Now it is earnestly desired, that all, and every of these will be pleased to read them over, and when they have so done, if they find nothing either to convince them of the Duty, or quicken them to it, or direct them in it, I shall willingly yield they have lost their labour for once, hoping they will as freely acknowledge that it is not the first time they have done so. I say again, search and see, and when you have prov'd all, hold fast that which is good; and I do the rather press and perswade to it, because (as I conceive) Singing of Psalms is of greater concernment than most men are aware of. We use it as a part of that Religious worship which we ow and yield to the only living and true God, and therefore had need, as of a good Warrant for doing it, so

To the Reader.

of a good understanding and frame of spirit so to do it, as therein to please God, and benefit our own souls. If there be no Ordinance of God for it, we cannot in reason expect a blessing from God in it; nay we had need be humbled for our former using it. If it appear to bee a duty (which I hope these plain Sermons do in some sort demonstrate) let us be humbled for our former carelesness, and endeavour henceforward to reap more benefit by it. For this I dare say, That of all Religious exercises, there is none wherein God hath been less honoured, or men less edified then in this of singing Davids Psalms. If that which is here presented may be of any use, either to perswade such as are otherwise minded, or to confirm such as are already perswaded, and direct them how to wait upon God, as they ought, for a blessing in this duty, Let the God of all grace have the glory; Which is the Joint desire of him that preach't, and them that publisht these Sermons. Farewell.

Singing



Singing of P S A L M E S

the Duty of Christians under
the New Testament.

The first S E R M O N.

Ephes. 5. 19.

*Speaking to your selves in Psalmes and
Hymnes and spirituall Songs, singing
and making melody in your hearts to
the Lord.*

THe subject matter of this Text is
singing of Psalmes; a duty which
many continue to do, but few
understand the nature, end, and use of it.
Others (not a few) do not sing at all;
yea, deny it to be a duty. For convicti-
on of the one, and direction of the o-

ther, I shall so handle the words read as attending these two things especially, *viz.*

the {lawfulness} of singing *Dauids*
 the {usefulness} Psalmes.

The Doctrinall part of this Epistle you have in the three first Chapters: The use begins with the fourth Chapter, where the Apostle applies the Doctrine of the rich and free Grace of God, exhorting them to walk worthy of that Vocation wherewith they were called, doing all duties, both such as concern them as Christians in common, and such as belong to them respectively in particular relations, as Husbands, Wives, Parents, &c. Not to hold you long about the Order and Connexion of these generall Precepts, *verse 18.* the Apostle admonishes them, *not to be drunk with wine*; as being most contrary to that accurate and circumspect walking required and expected of Christians: *ver. 15.* and then enforces his admonition by an argument drawn from the inconvenience or mischief of so foul and beastly a sin, *there's excess in it, excess in expences,*
 opposite

opposite to frugality and excess in delights, opposite to temperance; or as some understand it) *mores dissoluti*, inordinate behaviour, enormous lusts, D. *Hammonds* note on *Eph. 5.* all manner of loosenesse and wicked lewdness follow it, or all kinde of riot and lasciviousness go along with it. It follows *ver. 19.* [*But be filled with the Spirit*] As if he should say, I will shew another, and a better way of good fellowship, wherein you may drink your fill, health it, and pledge one another in that which is wholesome and usefull, and delightfull too. [*Be ye filled with the Spirit.*] The Spirit is opposed to wine, and filling with the Spirit, to excessive pouring in of wine or strong drink. The Spirit is not only water to cleanse and wash, but wine to chear and refresh; labour you to be filled with the Spirit, or to be full of goodness, *Ro. 14. 15.*

In this nineteenth verse he shews what are the effects of the Spirit when men are fill'd with it, and that in way of allusion to the manner of men when they are in their cups; then their tongues walk, they talk, and sing, and say they know

not what. Now (saith the Apostle) *Be ye but filled with the spirit*, and that will make you merry and wise too. Merry in a good and godly sort, it will make you talk and sing, and rejoyce in a spirituall manner, so as to glorifie God, edifie your selves, and one another. In a word, the Apostle here teaches Christians how to be merry in the Lord, and how to expresse their rejoycing in God, and that is in singing of Psalmes.

Particulars in the words observable are these :

1. He exhorts to singing of Psalmes.
2. He advises what Psalmes are to be sung.
3. He directs how to sing those Psalmes.

Or these $\left. \begin{array}{l} \text{That} \\ \text{What} \\ \text{How} \\ \text{Why} \end{array} \right\} \text{we must sing.}$

1. For the Duty it self, We must sing.
2. For the Matter, we must sing Psalmes and spirituall Songs.
3. For the Manner, we must sing, in, er with the heart.

4. For

4. For the End, we must sing unto the Lord.

I shall lay down onely one generall Doctrin, in handling of which I shall take into consideration all the aforesaid particulars.

Doct. *That singing of Psalmes is a duty of Christians under the New Testament.*

That it was the duty of Gods people under the old Testament, and that they did well in it, having a warrant for it; I presume no sober man will question. All the doubt is concerning the times of the New Testament, and yet not so much whether Psalmes are now to be sung, as what Psalmes we are to sing, and what manner of singing there ought to be.

That which I intend, and shall endeavour to prove, is, That it is the duty of Christians under the new Testament to sing *David's* Psalmes; and to this end I shall first make use of, and urge the strength and force of my Text, and that other parallel place, *Col. 3. 16.* clearing them from the exceptions which lie against them, and then answer other objections

jections made against the Psalmes, which we sing, and our manner of singing them.

First, 'Tis clear and unquestionable, that the Apostle in both places calls for singing of Psalmes as a Duty to be done by all Christians. In this Chapter, v. 4. He allows no foolish talking, or jesting, *ver. 18.* He allows no excessive drinking, or tipling, which prophane men account and call merry-making; yet he requires and calls for singing of Psalmes, and such like spirituall rejoycing in God.

Secondly, There is no more reason to exclude singing of Psalmes from being part of a Christians duty, than redeeming them, or being wise to know the will of God, or teaching and admonishing one another, since the Apostle enjoynes them all alike. He that sayes, *Walk circumspectly*, saith also, *Sing, and make melodie in your hearts to the Lord.*

Thirdly, In the Epistle to the Colossians, he cries down all legall Ceremonies, and yet notwithstanding calls for singing of Psalmes. Whence 'tis clear
and

and undeniable, that there must be singing of Psalmes, there being as expresse and peremptory Scripture-commands for this, as for Prayer, or any other Duty. This I thought good to clear in the first place, because I fear there are some who may look upon singing as a legall Ceremony, and so expir'd with the rest of the Jewish Worship.

I proceed to prove that there must be audible singing with the voice, and that of Christians together; though I deny not, but if a man have no company, he may (being disposed as *James* saith, *Jam. 5. 13.*) Sing, as well as pray alone.

Object. 1. 'Tis objected by some, that the Apostle here calls for speaking in Psalmes, and *Col. 3. 16.* for teaching and admonishing one another in Psalmes, and for singing in the heart, but not for singing with the voice.

Sol. This is to wrest and rack the Scripture, that so it may speak what men have a mind to. And this will appear if we consider

1. That though the Apostle exhorts
to

to speaking in Psalmes, &c. yet he explains himself in the following words [*singing and making melody, &c.*]

2. There was this reason why the Apostle exhorteth them to speak to themselves in Psalmes, &c. He would not have them walk as other Gentiles, who in their cups, and merry meetings, talk they know not what, or else after their heathenish custome, sang Songs to the praise of their Idols. Now (saith the Apostle) it must not be so with you Christians: But when you meet, and will be merry, speak to one another in Psalmes, &c.

Davenant. 3. Some (and those very learned and judicious) think there is no necessity of carrying these words, *viz.* [*teaching, and admonishing, and speaking, Col. 3.16.*] to that which follows, and the Originall seems much to favour their conceit; besides, the drift and scope of the Apostle, if it be considered, seems also to make much for them, for he exhorts Christians to let the Word of Christ dwell richly or plentifully in them, *i. e.* to be thoroughly furnished

furnished with a sound and saving knowledge of the doctrine of the Gospel; and then shews them the use and benefit of Scripture so studied and understood. The first use is, that Christians may thereby instruct one another in the doctrine of Faith. The second is to admonish one another concerning a godly life. The third is to rejoyce together, and refresh one another by singing such spirituall Songs as are recorded in Scripture for that end.

4. But if this satisfie not, I say further, That these words [*Speaking to your selves and teaching one another*] cannot admit of such a sense as some put upon them, *viz.* Teaching one another out of the Psalmes, since teaching in Psalmes is one thing, and teaching out of the Psalmes is another. *Dauids* Psalmes are a part, and a choice part of Scripture, and Christians may and must teach one another out of them, as well as out of other Scriptures, since they are all written *for our learning*, Rom. 15. 4. So *Acts* 28. 23. *Paul* perswaded the Jewes that Jesus was the Christ
ont

ἐκ τῶν νόμων
Μωσέως καὶ
ἐκ τῶν προφητῶν.

out of the law of Moses, and out of the Prophets. Had the Apostle intended the same thing in these places, why had he not used the same expression, viz. *Speaking to your selves out of the Psalmes*, which yet, we see he doth not; and therefore I conclude that he intends somewhat else than these men would have him. And that which he intends is this, that Christians in singing of Psalmes together, should teach and admonish one another, and speak to one another for mutual edifying as they do by joyning in prayer, or the like duties. So when *Paul* and *Silas* sung together, *Act. 16.25.* they thereby spake to themselves, or amongst themselves for their mutuall encouragement and comfort, methinks it is an excellent way of speaking to themselves, or one another, when Christians sing a Psalm together.

5. 'Tis clear to any that reads the Texts without prejudice, that speaking in Psalmes must be by singing of them. If he had said only [*speaking, teaching and admonishing*] then those mens gloss might

might have had some colour of truth in it : But since the Apostle adds [*singing and making melody*] 'tis clear he requires the singing of Psalms which is the thing we contend for.

As to the latter part of the objection (*viz*) That the Apostle calls for singing in the heart, but not for singing with the voice, I answer, That though we must sing with the heart, it will never follow, That therefore we must not sing with the voice, for then it would follow too, that we must not pray with the voice, because we are to pray with the heart, Now what an argument is this ? I must hear the word with my heart, and receive it into my heart, therefore I must not hear it with my ears. I grant we must sing with the heart, and with grace in the heart, *i. e.* with a holy and gracious frame of spirit suitable to the matter that we sing, or with thankfulnessse, as some interpret, or in sincerity, and uprightnesse of heart from our very souls, as David said, *With my whole heart will I praise thee*, *Psal. 9. 7.* and *Psal. 103* *Blesse the Lord, O my soul, &c.* For if
our

our singing, or any other Religious service be not with and from the heart, God will have no regard to it, and therefore 'tis no marvell that the Apostle calls for singing in and with the heart. Nature, Art, Parts, and common gifts may enable a man to the outside form, or bodily exercise either in singing or praying, &c. but the bodily exercise profiteth little. God is a Spirit, and will be worshipped in Spirit, and therefore requires us to sing, and pray and perform all religious services in, and with the heart, *i. e.* sincerely, and from our very souls.

Besides let it be considered that the Apostle here speaks in opposition to the prophane guise of Heathens singing to the praise of their Idols, or of drunkards in their cups, singing, and saying they know not what; and only making a noise that they may be heard. Now he would have Christians sing praises to the living God after another manner, viz. *With grace in their hearts, understanding*

τίδεν ἐν ταῖς
καρδίαις ὑμῶν
καὶ ψεῖα ; τὰ
τῆς μὲν σωστέ-
ως προσέχοντες.
Chryl. ad Eph.
5. 19.

standing what, and considering how they sing. Besides the Apostle considered how apt men are (as *Austin* saith of himself) to be taken more with musically accents then the heavenly matter ; and therefore gives a special caution for singing with the heart, it being a matter more then ordinary for men to keep their hearts in order when they are singing of Psalmes, but never intended we should not sing with the voice, but only he would have men with their minds, as well as with their mouths to glorifie God. *Paul* and *Silas* sang praises unto God, so as the prisoners heard them, *Act. 16. 25.* they sang with their voices, as well as in their hearts to the Lord.

Having thus cleared it from the text, That we must sing with an audible voice, I come in the second place to shew What we must sing ; and this is also in the Text [*Speaking to your selves in Psalmes, &c.*] We must sing nothing but spirituall songs to the Lord ; But what these Psalmes and hymns, and spirituall songs are, is another question.

The greatest difference I find amongst
In-

Interpreters, is the difference between these, it being a matter of some difficulty to distinguish them so as to determine precisely what are Psalmes, what Hymns, and what Spiritual Songs.

Many and various conceits of men I meet with, which I shall not trouble you withall, being the most of them very groundlesse. I know nothing more probable than this, viz. That Psalmes, and Hymns, and Spirituall Songs, do an-

מִזְמוֹרִים
תְּהִלִּים
שִׁירִים

swer to *Mizmorim*, *Tehillim*, and *Shirim*, which are the Hebrew names of David's

Psalmes. All the Psalms together are called *Tehillim*, i. e. *Praises*, or songs of praise. *Mizmor* and *Shir* are in the Titles of many Psalmes, sometimes one, and sometimes the other, and sometimes both joyn'd together, as they know well who can read the Originall. Now the Apostle calling them by the same

ψαλμοὶ
ὕμνοι
ὠδαί.

names by which the Greek Translation (which the New Testament so much follows)

renders the Hebrew, is an argument that he means no other than David's Psalms.

Be-

Besides, when ever the New Testament quotes the Psalmes, it means those of *David*, and so the Apostle speaks as taking it for granted, that they to whom he wrote, knew what Psalmes he meant. Sure I am that *David's* Psalmes are spirituall Songs, if ever there were any, spiritual Songs in the world.

obj. Yea, but some will object, that the Apostle means not *David's* Psalmes, but such spirituall Songs as shall be upon occasion composed by some Officer or Member of the Church, 1 *Cor.* 14. 26. for as in the primitive times there were some who had a gift of Psalmes, so now also there are that have, if not the same; yet the like gift, and such new Songs, they grant may be sung, but not any other,

Sol. 1. In answer to this, I say first, That in the primitive Churches some had a Psalm or spiritual Song dictated and inspired by the *holy Ghost*, though I dare not determine any thing peremptorily concerning their manner of singing those Psalmes in the Church.

2. I say, If any have the same fgi
now

now, they may do well to shew and use it for the benefit and edification of themselves and others. But I suppose no sober man will now pretend to any such extraordinary gift, which ceast in the Church long since, as the gift of Tongues, and other effects of the Spirit extraordinary.

If any shall pretend to such an extraordinary Spirit, I desire to know of them how others shall sing with them? for if they sing only their sudden raptures, 'tis impossible others should joyn, because their meditations will differ, and so will their meeter too, and such singing will be nothing but a sacrifice of fools, and the confusion at *Babel*.

If it be said, Not so; But one to sing in the spirit, and the rest to say *Amen*, I say (as before) no man now hath such a Spirit as some had then. There are indeed some that pretend much to the Spirit in these daies, who if they would be pleased to shew their raptures in singing, as they do many times in speaking, no question there would be as good rythme in the one as there is reason in the other.

If we must not sing but what's indited by an extraordinary Spirit, and no man have such a Spirit, it will follow that there must be no singing at all, and then how do Christians fulfill this law of Christ, commanding them to speak to one another *in Psalmes*, &c. which I have formerly proved to be a duty as much as *redeeming the time, walking circumspectly*, &c. I believe that they who had a *Psalm* in the Church of *Corinth*, had it by an extraordinary gift. How that Psalm was sang I cannot say, but this is clear and certain that *David's Psalmes*, which were ordinarily used in the Temple, though they were compos'd, yet they were not sung by an extraordinary Spirit. For when the *Levites*, Christ and his Disciples, *Paul* and *Silas* sung, those Psalmes must be such as were well known beforehand to the companies that sang them, else how could they sing together?

Obj. But here I meet with an objection that must be answered before I proceed, and 'tis this, *viz.* That Christ and his Disciples did not sing, but only gave thanks,

thanks, and that the Originall word imports no more, but as it were saying Grace after meat.

We deny not but the Originall notes praise, but let all that understand the Originall speak whether it doth not signifie to praise with singing. *Austin on Psalm 52. Hymni sunt laudes Dei cum cantico, & si sit laus, & non sit Dei, non est Hymnus: si sit laus, & Dei laus, & non cante-tur, non est Hymnus, oportet ergo ut, si sit Hymnus, habeat hæc tria, & laudem, & Dei, & cantico.* Hymns are the praises of God with a song; If it be praise, and not the praise of God, 'tis not a Hymn; if it be the praise of God, and not with a song, neither is it a Hymn, which must have these three in it, *viz.* Praise, the praising of God, and that with a song, or in singing. Questionlesse the Original signifies to praise, whether God or men in songs.

But what need we go any further than my Text, the word here put in the middle between Psalmes and Songs, sufficiently shewvs vvhat manner of praising God that vvas. Besides the constant

vote

vote of all the Learned that Christ did sing after his last ^{supper}, according to the custome of the Jews, whose practice it was after the Cup of salvation or thanksgiving to sing some of *David's* Psalmes, which solemn Hymn they call, to this day, the Great *Hallelujah*.

That Christ prayed and prayed God otherwise than in singing, we grant: But that he also sang, is clear, and if he had sung a new song composed on the sudden, probably one of the Evangelists would have recorded that song, as well as *John* hath set down our Saviours prayer, *John* 17. So *Paul* and *Silas* Act. 16. 25. prayed and sang praises aloud, so as the prisoners heard them, which argues more than probably, a more than ordinary lifting up of their voices. But if we yield that neither Christ and his Disciples did sing, nor *Paul* and *Silas*, yet my Text with *Col.* 3.16. & *James* 5.13. do clearly evince that Christians must sing, which is the thing we plead for.

But I return to answer the former
B
objection

objection concerning singing of Psalmes composed by an ordinary and common gift, as God in his providence gives occasion. And to this I say that I am not so much against composing as imposing; when men set up their own new songs, and shut out *David's* Psalmes. Suppose it lawfull for men of spirituall mindes to endite a Psalm, and then commend it to others, and sing it; yet it will not follow, that therefore we must not sing the Psalmes of *David*.

Obj. But here again 'tis objected, That we conceive Prayers; and therefore may as well conceive Psalmes too, for praising God upon occasion.

Sol. I will not say it is unlawfull to conceive and compose a Psalm upon occasion. But I say again, there is no reason that our conceived Psalmes should shut out *David's*; and I desire it may be considered, First, That a man may conceive a Prayer on the sudden, and put it up to God, so as others may joyn with him: But a man cannot so conceive and sing a Psalm, it being impossible, at once, to contrive the Matter, and

and meeter, and be devout too.

Obj. But here it will be replied, That such a conceiving of Psalmes is not intended, but that some one first compose, and bring a spirituall Song, and then commend it to be sung by others.

Sol. But why should any man preferre his Composures before *David's* Psalmes, is it because they are more excellent?

Obj. No, it will be said, We do not compare with *David*. Onely our composed Psalmes are more suitable to the present occasions of Gods people; we conceive Prayers, as occasion is offered, and so we would have Psalmes conceived, and composed too.

Sol. 1. God himself hath made and given us a Psalm-book, But I know of no such Prayer-book that he hath left us.

2. There can be no composures of men, that will suit the occasions, necessities, afflictions, or affections of Gods people, as the Psalmes of *David*, concerning which we may say, what the *Jews* said of Manna, They have a taste and relish according to every ones Palate. Let it once be granted that we

must sing Psalmes, I'll warrant you *David's* Psalmes shall carry it; there being no art or spirit of man now, that can come near that of *David*. What though they were penn'd upon occasion, and according to the necessities of Gods people then? so were the other Scriptures, and yet they concern us as much now, as they did the people of God then. Besides we read that in *Hezekiah's* time the Levites were to praise God with the words of *David*, 2 *Chron.* 29. 30. which shews that the Psalmes were for the use of Gods people in after-ages upon all occasions, and I would fain know what occasions Gods people now, or at any time, either have, or can have, which *David's* Psa'mes may not sute with, and better than any Songs composed by an ordinary gift. What glorious things are spoken of Christ his Kingdome, and the great work of Redemption by him? Who can admire and adore the infinite excellencies of God in better phrases and formes than the spirit hath dictated to us

us in *David's* Psalmes ? If we would chear our spirits, or compose them for hearing or other duties, what more heavenly Meditations ? If we would commend and magnifie the Power, Wisdome, and goodness of God in any mercy, how can we do it better than in the words of *David* ? It would become these that quarrell at our singing of *David's* Psalmes, to give us better in the room of them, or else to consider how they fulfill the Law of Christ, when they sing neither those, nor any other.

And whereas occasionall composures are so much cried up by many, I ask them what poor soules shall do that cannot compose Psalmes, neither have any to do it for them ? Certainly it is a duty (as hath been proved) that lies upon all Gods people, and to whom shall many of them go for a Psalme, if not to *David* ? They that pen psalmes better, or at least fitter (as they think) do it for their particular respective

Congregations : In the meantime, what shall others do, unless the same men will undertake to furnish all the Churches of God in the Land, and the world too, with a better Psalm-book, than that of *David*? If it be said, that some Officer or member in every Congregation may do as much upon occasion : I answer, perhaps not ; nay, without all peradventure, the gift will not be found at all, or in any tolerable measure amongst many Christians, and then, when they meet, and would be merry in the Lord, poor soules they shall have never a Psalm to sing, as *James* requires, *James* 5. 13. Nor shall we, upon this account, have very much singing in private families, of which there are thousands in *England*, that will not yield one who can endite, or compose a Psalm fit for the occasions of Gods people. Therefore if these men will not give us another Psalm-book in stead of *David's*, we shall have little singing in Congregations, and less in private families ; But I shall argue this no further, onely I add, that 'tis not
enough

enough for them to say that *David's* Psalmes must give place to their new Songs, especially, since the former can plead prescription for so many ages, but they must prove it, and that strongly too, that we must not sing *David's* Psalmes.

For the accommodation of *David's* Psalmes to the present particular occasions of Gods people, I shall speak more hereafter: all I shall say for present is this, That if we cannot accommodate them, or any passages in them, the fault is our own. There are many, I fear, who cannot accommodate many passages in *David's* Psalmes: as when he professes his zeal for God, love to God, his Word and Ordinances, and wayes of Worship, his integrity, humility, heavenly-mindedness, &c. But that's because they have not such a heart as was in *David*; and it may be their consciences cannot well brook such a word of admonition and conviction as they meet withall in many places and passages of *David's* Psalmes.

But if we sing *David's* Psalmes, let

us sing them in *David's* tunes, and not in such Meetre as men have devised.

Sol. This reasoning will prove as well that we shall not read *David's* Psalmes; for may not a man as well say, Why should we read them in any Language but that wherein they were written? and so farewell singing and reading Psalmes too; and if you say but as much of all the other parts of Scripture, farewell all preaching of gifted men, for they will have never a Text nor Bible left them. But if we think our selves bound to read the Psalmes in our own Tongue, why may we not as well sing them in our own Tunes? If you say, there is a necessity of reading, I grant it, and say, There is a necessity of singing them also; there being as expresse precepts in Scripture for the one, as for the other. When any man shall give us as a good reason against reading in our own Tongue, we will give over singing Psalmes in our own Tunes; till then, we believe there is the like necessity of the one and the other, or else we are come to a good passe indeed, that

that we must neither sing nor say. My answer then is in a word this, That there being a necessity of singing, as well as of reading, we may do the one in our own Tunes, as well as the other in our own Tongue.

There is yet one objection more against singing of *David's* Psalmes, which was not thought on at the preaching of these Sermons, and it is this :

Obj. As the Scripture commands us to pray, but prescribes us no set forms of Prayer, which we are bound to use, and no other : so, when it commands us to sing Psalmes, it doth not tie us to any forme, but leaves us to our liberty. For, if we are not tied to a form in praying, why should we be tied up to any form in singing ?

I dare not say (as some do) that all formes of Prayer are forbidden by the second Commandment ; nor yet that they wholly stint and quench the Spirit. But to let that pass, I answer :

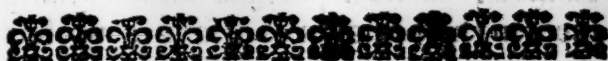
Sol. 1. The Apostle hath prescribed us what to sing, *viz.* Psalmes and Hymnes, and spiritual songs, which are the exprets
Titles

Titles of *David's* Psalmes, as was shewed before.

2. There is a difference in this, that the Lord did not prescribe unto his people set formes of Prayer, as he prescribed set formes of Psalmes, 2 *Chron.* 29.30 They were to sing in the words of *David* and *Asaph* but we read not, that they were to pray in any such set form. God gave them a psalm-book, but not a Prayer-book, as was said before.

3. When the Psalmes of *David* and *Asaph* were ordinarily sung in the Temple, dare any man say, that the Spirit either in the Levites or others, was stinted or quenched? and why should it be stinted now, more than it was then? Since we have the same formes which God himself appointed, why may we not expect the same enlargement of heart, as the people of God had then?

4. We must sing in a forme or not at all, as I shewed formerly, though we may very well pray without it. Since therefore we must have a form, why should we not prefer such as God hath appointed before any other?



SERMON II.

Ephes. 5. 19.

Speaking to your selves in Psalmes and Hymnes, and spirituall Songs, Singing, &c.

THE Apostle calls upon the people of God to edifie themselves in *singing of Psalmes*. This we have proved to be the duty of Christians, and answered some Objections made against it.

Obj. But how can Christians do this in a mixt Congregation (will some say) where there is a multitude that joyn in the duty, who yet, (God knowes) are no way able to do it in such a manner, as may be either pleasing to God, or profitabie to their own soules? They cannot sing in their heart, nor to the Lord. And hence some complain they are much scandalized,

dalized, to hear profane and ungodly men in their singing of Psalmes profess their Repentance, the integrity and uprightness of their hearts, when, God knows, there is no such thing in them. **Therefore** (say they) What do such men in singing, but sound out so many lies? yea, and blaspheme the holy Name and Truths of God, in doing of that duty? and this so troubles and distracts them, that they cannot finde in their hearts to joyn in the duty with such profane people.

This is, I conceive, the main thing that troubles the most, and therefore though there is but little strength in the Argument, yet, since it is that which swayes with so many, I shall be the larger in clearing it.

They say, many profane wretches sing Psalmes and sing lies; and therefore they do not, they cannot sing.

Sol. I wish, that some of these who make this Objection do not say lies; for that many (who do not sing Psalmes, and give this for a reason) do lie, I shall make it appear thus:

They

They say, they do not sing, because of the mixt multitude, with whom they cannot joyn. Then how comes it to pass, That Psalmes are forborn, not onely in the Congregation, but in their own houses also? Therefore there is some deceit in this argument. I do heartily wish such as these, before they charge lying upon others in singing, to forbear lying themselves: for they do not sing in their families, nor in their closets, neither alone, nor with others. Therefore this is not the thing, there is somewhat else in their hearts. But I will answer the Argument otherwise: though I do premise this in the first place, That if they will not sing in the Congregation, because of the mixt multitude, yet let them sing in their own families, If they say, *There is a mixt company in their families* also: I ask, Whose fault is that? I should be loth to keep them in my family, with whom I cannot pray, and praise God. But if so, yet, why do they not sing by themselves: for a man may as well sing alone, as pray alone: if none other be good enough
to

to sing with them, let them sing by themselves. But it seems they do not think themselves good enough to sing withall.

1. To gratifie them in what we can, I grant, that there are too many such, who cannot sing with grace in their hearts; and this we acknowledg to be both their sin and misery. But yet withall we think, though there be thousands that cannot sing a Psalm as they ought to do, with *grace in their hearts to the Lord*: yet it is the duty of those men to do it; and because they cannot do it as they should, it will never follow that therefore they are not bound to do it, or that they do not sin, if they do neglect it.

It is certain, a profane spirit is no more able to pray, than he is able to sing praises to God. But I hope you will not say, that therefore a profane person ought not to pray, or that it is not his duty to pray, or that he doth not sin if he neglect to pray, *Act. 8. 22. Peter exhorts Simon Magus to pray, though he were a wicked man.*

Obj.

Obj. But he bids him first to repent.

Sol. True; he doth so, and there was a good reason for it. *Peter* would have him to pray, so as his prayer might be heard, and accepted with God, which he knew, could not be without repentance. *For God heareth not sinners*, John 9. 31. *If I regard wickednesse in my heart* (saith *David*, *Psa*, 66. 18.) *the Lord will not hear my prayer*, But if a wicked man will humble himself, and pray, he hath Gods promise to be accepted. If he repent not, God hath no regard either to his prayer or his person, yet still it is his duty to pray, and his sin that he doth it not, and therefore I may persuade, and exhort him to do it. I would have men sing with the heart, so as to please God in it. But if they cannot do it, (and do it they cannot so long as they hold fast deceit) yet it is their duty to do it. Else wicked men have a fair excuse for not doing that duty which lieth upon them by vertue of Gods commandment. To pray without faith is a great sin, and I think not to pray at all, (is in some sense) a greater sin. He
that

that prayes without faith and grace is an hypocrite, and he that prayes not at all, is an Atheist. So to sing without grace in the heart is hypocrisie; and I think, not to sing at all, not to performe that duty and worship we owe unto the living God, is a kinde of Atheisme. A wicked man after a sort profanes and pollutes every Ordinance he takes in hand: but it will not hence follow, therefore it is not his duty to wait upon God in Ordinances.

Secondly, It is true, a wicked man is not worthy to take the name of God in his mouth, and when he doth, he doth (in some sort) blaspheme God in abusing his word. But though he be not worthy, yet (as one saith) Gods Word is worthy to come into his minde, and into his mouth too, to convince him of his wickedness. And here is a very great mistake of these men that thus urge and argue, and they bewray a great deal of ignorance about the nature, end, and use of this duty; for one great and main end of singing Psalmes is *Instruction*: *A Psalm of David for Instruction*,
is

is the Title of many of the Psalmes, that is one end of singing of Psalmes. Therefore I say, though they be not worthy to take the Name of God into their mouthes, yet the Word of God is worthy to come into their mouths and mindes for their instruction and admonition. *Deut. 32. Moses penned a Psalm, and Deut. 31. 19. there is a command of God, that it should be penned; and for what end was it? namely to convince the wicked Israelies of their apostacy from, and rebellion against the Lord. And certainly, when ever a Psalm is sung, be they never so bad that sing it, there is a Word of God in it, to reprove and condemn their sin. And doth not the Apostle say (Col. 3, 16.) Teaching and admonishing one another in Psalmes? In every Psalm of Instruction (I say) there is a word to convince the ungodly of their ungodlinesse. As for example: Psal. 1. 1. Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsell of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornfull: But his delight is*

is in the Law of the Lord, and in his Law doth he meditate day and night : he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, his leaf shall not wither, and whatsoever he doth shall prosper. The ungodly are not so, but are like the chaff which the winde dri-
 veth away ; Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgement, nor sinners in the Congregation of the righteous. The Lord knoweth the way of the righteous : But the way of the ungodly shall perish. When this is said, there is a conviction, and when this is sung, there is a greater conviction, because there is more time and space to meditate on those holy truths of God. Doth not God here, as it were, judge him out of his own mouth ? and he himself pronounce the sentence, *That he is one of those ungodly ones* of whom the Psalmist speaks by the spirit in that Psalm ?

So *Psalm. 2.* there is an admonition to those that do not *kiss the Son*, and submit to the scepter of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Obj. But they take no notice of it, they go on and sing a Psalm, and so think they have done God good service.

Sol. It may be so, So it is in hearing of Sermons,

Sermons, no question many are little affected with what is delivered, though the Minister presse it home upon their consciences, and deal never so plainly and powerfully : yet I hope, you will not say, but the Word of God preached hath this end (*viz.*) *Conviction* or *Admonition*. So it is in singing of Psalmes, wicked men are made judges of their own wickednesse by the Word of God in their own mouthes.

Obj. Again, Whereas it is urged by some, That they are very much scandalized to hear profane men profess a lie in singing the 119 *Psalm*, and the like, touching their *love to, and delight in the law of God*, and other such expressions which *David* uses in those Psalmes.

Sol. We answer, True ; it is a matter of scandall, but how farre forth we shall consider anon. He that sings *David's Psalmes*, and not with a sanctified heart, as *David* did, he lies in his heart, and in his throat too. But suppose such a one should say *David's Psalmes*, or pray *David's Psalmes*, or read them out of a Book, or joyn with the Minister in prayer

prayer, where he is the mouth for the rest that do joyn with him ; Doth he not professe the like then ? When the Minister (who is the peoples mouth to speak to God) declares the experiences that he and others have had of Gods goodnesse, and the work of grace upon their soules ; when he professeth or expresseth godly sorrow for sin, laments their infirmities, indisposednesse, untowardnesse and frowardnesse of heart, and further blesteth God for spirituall graces, and the evidences of Gods love, &c. When (I say) the Minister doth thus in the Congregation, and profane men are there, and pretend to go along with him in this, do they not lie in prayer, since they never had experience of Gods goodnesse, and the work of God upon their soules, they never had any evidences of Gods love to them in all their lives ? And why are we not as much scandalized at their praying, as at their singing ? For though they make not such a noise with their mouths in prayer, yet they do lie and profane the
Name

Name of God as much in the one as they do in the other. Therefore if any be scandalized by them in the one, why not also in the other? Surely, by this reason, we must not only forbear singing, but praying with them; Nay, by the same reason, we may not hear the Word of God with them, for a profane wretch doth even in that also take the Name of God in vain, and if he be not powerfully convicted by the Word of God, he shall be one day made to know what a sad thing it is to take the Name of God in his mouth, when he hated to be reformed: *Unto the wicked God saith, What hast thou to do to declare my statutes, or that thou shouldest take my Covenant in thy mouth? Seeing thou hatest instruction, and castest my words behinde thee.* This Argument is that which is urged for separation, and if it hold good for separating in one, it may as well hold (for ought I see) for separation in all duties whatsoever, and so *in hearing the Word of God also.* For hearing the Word is an act of spiritual communion, as well as prayer, or singing:

singing : I say, there is communion with God in *hearing* as well as in *praying* : In *prayer* we speak to God; and in *hearing* God speaks to us : In *prayer* we profess our selves to be the Lords people, to have all our delight in him, and all our expectations from him ; and in *hearing* we come to sit before him as his people, to ask Counsell of God, and to know his will , and there professe whatsoever the Lord shall command us , that we will do.

Thus there is spirituall communion with God in *hearing the Word*, as well as in *praying* and *singing of Psalmes*. So then, if we may not sing nor pray, neither may we hear with mixt company ; and if it be thus, the people of God are in a very sad condition. I say again, If the presence of wicked men shall hinder their acceptation and communion with God in those duties which they notwithstanding do in the sincerity and uprightnesse of their hearts, out of all question the people of God are in a very sad condition , because they can hardly assemble without great hazard

hazard of having one devil or other among them, what then will become of them? Nay, I would fain know with whom they shall joyn? for our Saviour himself had a select company, but twelve in all, and one of them was a devil. And so, when you have done what you can, and made choice of your company, if there be not a black devil, a prophane wicked man; yet there may be a white devil, an hypocrite, which is bad, and as abominable to God as the other. I have heard, that some have forborne prayers in their families with their children and servants, because they thought them not good enough to pray withall. I desire these to consider what *Paul* did in the Ship before the company he sailed with; He was not so scrupulous, but gave thanks to God, even before profest Infidels and Heathens, *Acts 27. 35.* *He took bread, and gave thanks to God in the presence of them all;* because he knew it was a duty which all men are bound to do, and though they did not, nor could not do it as they should, yet it was their duty, and

and therefore *Paul* praises God even in the presence of those wicked men. So may we do the like, though wicked men be by, and joyn in the duty, what's that to us?

Oh! But it much troubles and distracts them, when they see men of profane spirits joyn with them, and blaspheme (as they say) the Name of God.

Alas for them, that they are so tender of Gods honour. But is it so indeed? or is not this another lie? 'Tis notoriously known, there are many great and horrid blasphemies against *Jesus Christ* and the *Holy Ghost*, and the *Scriptures*, &c. and yet I hear not much of their being scandalized at these: But they are mightily scandalized to hear wicked men *sing Psalmes*. But methinks, if they be indeed scandalized at this, they should be more scandalized at those other blasphemies; and truly let me tell them, their not being scandalized at those horrid blasphemies indeed before spoken of, is a very great scandall to many that are truly godly.

Oh

Oh that there were no other Blasphemies in *England* than singing of Psalmes by wicked men, and that one day in a week. But doth not the Land mourn, *because of oaths?* and are not many wicked ones, all the week long, *blaspheming the living God?* Yet some of these men (who make this Objection) have, not shewed at any time (that we have seen) so much dislike of these blasphemies. If you be troubled at blasphemies, be troubled at all blasphemies. If it be blasphemy for wicked men to sing Psalmes, sure, there be other as great blasphemies in *England* as this; and I wish, that some had not blasphemed the Name of God in another manner, that have given over *singing of Psalmes*. We grant, That wicked men cannot do this or any duty as they should, they lie, *dishonour God*, and take his name in vain. And it is a grief to every godly man, whose *righteous soul is sadden within him*, when he hears or sees, that God hath not that honour given him, which is due unto his Name. Yea, it grieves all godly men, that others are not as they are;

They are of Moses his spirit, *They would all the Lords people were Prophets*; They would that all could hear, and pray, and read, and sing Psalmes, as they themselves can. But be it so, that they cannot sing Psalmes, as they should do it, and it is thy grief, yet why shouldst thou neglect thy duty, and not do that which God calls thee to? If he that sits next to thee lie unto God in professing his sincerity and integrity of heart when there is no such thing, yet let me tell thee, thou mayest be accepted of God in what thou doest, if thou do that in sincerity, which another doth in hypocrisie. And take this from me, you that are so scandalized at the hypocrisie and prophanenesse of others, look well to your selves, sweep before your own doors, and see that your own hearts be right; and if they be, I will warrant you, the wickednesse of another mans heart shall never hurt you, or hinder your acceptance with God. Thou prayest out of sincerity, thou prayest out of experience, thou prayest from thy heart; and another man that joyns
with

with thee, doth none of these things, and doth not God therefore accept thee, thinkest thou? Yes, God will hear the bleatings of one *sheep*, though he were in the midst of a thousand *wolves*. If it were not so, Gods people were in a sad condition, and, for ought I know, must go out of this world, to finde those whom they may joyn withall in prayer or praise, or any other duty. Therefore I say, Is it thy duty to praise God in a Psalme, or is it not? If it be not thy duty, then do it no where; but if it be, then thou mayst do it in any company that will joyn with thee.

But the truth is, many of those that do not sing, believe it not to be a duty, and upon that ground wholly neglect it; If it be thy duty, thou art bound to do it in the best manner thou canst, and thou art never the worse, though others that joyn with thee do it not as they ought, and so instead of a blessing bring a curse upon themselves, for God (I tell thee) doth not accept of thee according to thy company, but according to thy integrity. *If thou*
C 2 *doest*

46 *Singing of Psalmes*

dost well, (saies God to *Cain*) shalt thou not be accepted? So, if thou seekest God in sincerity, from thy very soul, shalt thou not be accepted? Questionless thou shalt. Can God reject a sacrifice offered to him from a poor, contrite, broken heart, because that some wicked men are present?

If *Cain* and *Abel* offered sacrifice at one and the same time and upon the same *Altar* (as for some reasons, and by some circumstances in the Text, it is conjectured they might) did not God accept the sacrifice of *Abel*, because that *Cain* was present? Sure we are, that *Christ* offered in the *Temple*, when not onely many of the people, but the Priests also were most ungodly wretches.

If singing of Psalmes be a duty, thou hast more need be troubled at thy sinfull neglect, than at anothers sinfull doing of it: and truly, it is strange to me, that for Fear of participating in others sins, men should commit sins of their own, as bad or worse. Here I might shew, how the sinnes of some might lie upon others. But I shall not go so farre out of my way;

way ; I shall onely adde ; When some will come to an Ordinance of God, to which they have no right, and thou canst not hinder them : Or when they will do any duty which they ought, but cannot do, as it should be done, do thou blesse God that hath given thee an heart to do thy duty, and pittie those poor soules who cannot do it as well as thou canst.

Singing of Psalmes is a duty, wherein there is a word of *Admonition* and *Instruction* to wicked men, and it is a morall duty which every man is bound to do, *To praise the great God that made heaven and earth* : That they cannot do it as they ought is *their sin and misery*, and will be our sin as much, or more, if we do it not at all.

And now I shall intreat all godly and sober-minded Christians, that they will not be frightened from doing that which is their duty by such a *scar-crow* as this. If wicked men joyn with them, and multiply transgression by offering the *sacrifice of fools* ; they are to be pittied and prayed for. But 'tis a senselesse conceit,

that therefore such as are godly shall neglect their duty.

Now I am sure, It is the duty of all men in the world to praise God : Wicked men are bound to praise God in a Psalm; it is their sin and misery, they cannot do it as they ought, but they are bound to do it in a Psalm, as much as they are bound to pray, to hear the Word, or do any other duty. Nay, I say more, it is some glory to God, when prophane persons do sing *David's Psalmes* to their own conviction. The Minister glorifies God in the speaking of his Word, although many in the Church should laugh and scoff at it, because the Word of God hath its end, either to convert, or to confound. So when a Psalm is sung, it is the Word of God, although it be sung by a wicked man, and it is a word of conviction, and a word of instruction to him : It is the Word of God, I say, in his mouth, and herein God is glorified, that a wicked man is made with his own mouth to condemn himself, and his own wickednesse.

What

What scruples yet remain, I hope shall be resolved when I come to the directive part, which I promised. For the Objections that are commonly made, arise from ignorance of the Nature, End, and Use of the duty. I shall now close all at this time, with these Considerations. The Question, is, Whether we should sing Psalmes? Now to confirme us a little, That this practice of singing Psalmes in the Church of God, is not so groundlesse as some men imagine,

1. First of all, consider this Scripture-ground, That God calls his people to spiritual rejoycing in him, *Philip. 4. 4. Rejoyce in the Lord alwayes, and again I say, rejoyce.* Gods people have alwayes matter of rejoycing. Sometimes God calls to *mourning*, and *girding with sackcloth*, to fasting and prayer; but alwayes God calls his people to rejoyce, *1 Thes. 5. 16. Rejoyce in the Lord alwayes, Rejoyce evermore.* Gods people have alwayes matter of *rejoycing*. Though they have matter of *mourning* one way, yet they have matter of *rejoycing* another

way : 1 Pet. 1.6. *Wherein ye greatly rejoyce* (saith the Apostle) *Though now for a season, you be in heaviness through manifold tribulations*: Still they have matter of joy even in the midst of tribulations.

Secondly, It is clear, That as God requires such a holy affection in his people, so he doth require some expressions suteable to that affection. Therefore, we must not onely rejoyce with our *hearts*, but with our *tongues* also, with *all that is within us*, with all that is without us, with all that is about us. As therefore it is a truth, That (in a sense) Gods people should be *praying alwayes* (to wit) in their hearts, with ejaculatory prayers, lifting up their souls unto the Lord, wheresoever they go; and it is as true also, That God requires his people should pray unto him with their *mouthes* at some times more especially: Even so it is here in the duty of praise, God requires us to *rejoyce alwayes*, and *alwayes*, as it were, to be praising of him in our *hearts*. But he requires us, at some times, to praise him with our *mouthes* also, when God gives occasion

occasion of so doing. As Gods people of old did sing praises ordinarily on the Sabbath, and other solemn times, and extraordinarily, when God gave them occasion, by some deliverance, victory, or other mercy. In *Psalm 126.2.* *Their mouths were filled with laughter, and their tongues with singing.* And so *Judges. 5.* *Deborah sung a song.* And so *Acts 16.* *Paul and Silas having joy in God, exprest it in singing of a Psalm.* So it is said of the people of God, *Revelat. 15. 3.* *They shall sing the song of Moses,* that is, as *Moses* and the people of *Israel* sung that song, *Exod. 15.* for their deliverance from *Pharaohs* tyranny, and their slavery in *Egypt*, so shall the people of God sing a song for their deliverance from their slavery under *Antichrist*. So the *Twenty four Elders* fell down, and worshipped, and sung a new song unto the *Lord God Almighty*, *Revel. 5. 8, 9.* which is to be understood of all Gods worship, as some learned men conceive: And *Rev. 14. 3.* It is said, the people of God there should sing a song that no man else could sing:

A Learned Interpreter upon that place, conceives all *Gospel-worship* to be meant.

Now if singing were such an abomination (as some would have it) in the Church of Christ, I wonder, why the holy Ghost should use that expression in that place, and set forth all *Gospel-worship* under *singing a new song*, Psalm 126. When Gods peoples hearts were enlarged with spiritual joy within, they did open their mouthes wide to shew forth the praises of the Lord. And if God give us more than ordinary joy, why should not we now make more than ordinary expression of it ? There are many exhortations in the Psalmes, to *sing, and shout, and clap hands, and make a joyfull noise*. Now these signes of spiritual rejoycing in God were no *legall Ceremonies*, but such as godly Christians may use now, as well as they did then; so *David sung, and danced before the Ark with all his might*, being so transported with holy joy, that he could not forbear : And why are men so much against singing of Psalmes ? When there

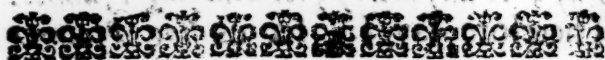
is good news ; and matter of great joy, we ring out our bells, and shoot off the great gunns, shout and make a noise otherwayes ; and why not as well make a joyfull noise in singing of Psalmes ? I hear no man finde fault with the former (viz.) Ringing, or shooting, and joyfull acclamations. And is not singing of Psalmes as fit and proper an expression of our rejoycing in God, as any of those ?

If a company of godly Christians then will go by themselves, take some choice parts of Davids Psalmes, and sing them, I would know, if this would not make as good a noise in the ears of the Lord, as shooting of gunns, or ringing of bells. The Apostle sayes, upon this very account, *Is any merry ? let him sing Psalmes*, James 5. 13. Nay, I had almost said, is not singing of Psalmes as good an exercise, and becoming Christians, as playing at Cards, or Tables ? I wonder how some that quarrell so much at singing of Psalmes, are yet so devout at these exercises. For my part, I am of the minde, That, singing of Psalmes (as much as some

some slight it now adayes) is as innocent, and honest, and usefull an exercise, as playing at Cards : And why may we not sing a Psalm as well as make vain and foolish pastimes, or use antick and apish toyings, which would offend any sober and grave man to behold ? Surely, if *singing of Psalmes* be once out of fashion, I hope none of the other will be used amongst us, for these certainly are as good as the other, if I should say no more of them. What, doth God never give us occasion to sing a Psalm of praise ? or have we never any hearts to do it ? If so, we are the saddest Christians that ever were, and I am confident, God never had such servants in former ages, as we are. It is well known, what *Plinius Secundus* wrote unto *Trajan*, concerning Christians *singing of Psalmes* in those dayes ; as also what *Tertullian* in his Apology saith of their frugall supper, and solacing themselves with Psalmes. We all know, what *James* saith, *James* 5. 13. *Is any afflicted, let him pray,*

pray; Is any merry, let him sing Psalmes. Therefore say I, let us sing Psalmes when we are merry, as well as pray when we are sorry. Sing somewhere, at some times, by our selves, or with others; performe the duty, except we will lay aside praying also. I shall leave that text of *James* with you, and intreat you seriously to consider, whether if we must pray, we must not sing also.

Sermon



SERMON III.

Ephes. 5. 19.

Speaking to your selves in Psalmes and Hymnes, and spirituall Songs, Singing, &c.

IN these words there are two main things considerable, (*viz.*) the lawfulness and the usefulness of singing Psalmes. We have done with the former, and now come to the later (*viz.*) the usefulness of singing. This I call the directive part, or Directory, and in it we shall inquire into these two particulars, (*viz.*) how we must sing, and why we must sing; the Apostle shews both: We must sing with the heart, or with grace in the heart; and we must sing to the Lord. Singing and making melody in your hearts to the Lord; that is (say some) to the Lord Jesus Christ, or to the Lord Jehovah, i. e. to his praise and

and glory ; as it is said of the *Israelites*, Psalm 106. 12. *They sang his praises.* Now this the Apostle calls for here, if we would sing a Psalm as we ought, to the praise of the Lord, to the glory of his great Name, we must do it, in or with the heart. *God is a spirit, and will be worshipped in spirit*, John 4. 24. He calls for the heart, *My son, give me thy heart.* So Chrysostome upon this Text, *Attending with understanding.* The meaning of the Apostle is clear, and unquestionable, That our singing of Psalmes must not be a lip-labour, an outward bodily exercise ; it must not be the pleasing our selves or others with the tune of a Psalm : that is not it which God looks for at our hands, but we must sing as *Mary* did, Luke 1. 46. *My soul doth magnifie the Lord, my spirit rejoyceth in God my Saviour.* And as *David* in the 103 Psalm, *Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy Name.* This is that which the Apostle here calls for ; and it implies these two particulars.

1. A sense and understanding of that which is sung, *I will sing with understanding*

ing, saith the Apostle; 1 Cor. 14, 15. that is, so as I would be understood by others, therefore by himself much more, *Sing ye praises with understanding*, Psal. 47. 7. *a blinde Sacrifice* was an abomination to the Lord.

3. It must be an inward feeling, and affection of the heart and spirit. So David in Psalm 57. 7. *My heart is fixed, my heart is fixed: or, my heart is prepared: or, my heart is disposed.* When a man's heart is filled with the Spirit, as the Apostle speaks, when a mans heart is full of holy and heavenly thoughts, affections, and meditations, and so *out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks*; when the frame of a man's heart is suteable to the holy and spirituell matter that is sung, this is *singing in the heart*, or *with grace in the heart, to The Lord*, who looks at the heart, and how a man is affected within. Certainly (as one sayes) *grace in the heart* is the best tune to any Psalm; and without this, the sweetest best tun'd voice is but howling and bawling in the ears of the Almighty. Yet do we not exclude the voice
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in singing; *David* used it, *I will sing, and give praise even with my glory; awake psaltery and harp, I my self will awake early*, Psal. 57. 8. and 108. 2. *Awake up my glory*, sayes *David*; that was his tongue, called his glory, because his tongue in singing was an excellent instrument of glorifying God. Nor do we exclude all modulation or tuning of the voice according to the lawes of Musick, provided there be no affectation of it, so as our hearts be wholly taken up with it. Provided also, there be no empty tautologies or chanting over and over the same things, tossing of the Word of God like a tennis-ball from one to the other, like that Cathedrall musick intended onely to please the eare, and no way ordered to the use of edifying in grace and knowledg. But for the voyce in singing we plead, and also for singing with tunes. All the Psalmes were penned in Hebrew meeter, with the exactest Art that might be. They were penned (saith one) with *exactness and variety of Meeter*.
1. In such verses as are futable to the Poetry of the Hebrew Language, and not
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in the stile of such other books of the Old Testament as are not poetically.

2. Many verses together in severall of the Psalmes do also run in rimes, as those know, that understand the Hebrew; and as *Buxtorph* shews, *Theſau.* p. 629. But though we plead for singing with the voice, yet our chiefest respect in that *singing* must be unto the heart and spirit, to the understanding, and to the Affection, and inward feeling of what is sung, for this is to sing *with grace in the heart.*

Hence it follows, that none can sing a Psalm as he ought, but he that hath grace in his heart, and is renewed in the spirit of his minde. None could learn that Song, *Rev.* 14. 3. but the *hundred forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth*; which was onely the people of God who stood in opposition to *Antichrist*; and by their singing there, is meant all spirituall Worship performed by Gods people to him. It is said there, *No man could learn that Song, but those that were redeemed from the earth*; the Antichristian earthly generation

tion had no skill on the spirituall Worship and Service offered to God in the true Christian Church. Therefore the Psalmist saith, *Psal. 33. 1.* (speaking of this duty) *Rejoyce in the Lord, O ye righteous, for praise is comely for the upright*; it is impossible for others to rejoyce in the Lord. Onely Gods own people have an inward experimentall knowledg of the glorious Excellencies and Attributes of God (*viç.*) his Power, Wisdome, goodness, &c. they onely have *tasted how sweet the Lord is* in his promises, and Providences: They know, and none but they, what the Offices of Christ are, in the power, fruit, and benefit of them. They know, what it is to be redeemed from the earth, and from death, and from the nethermost hell. They onely have experience of the mercy and loving kindeness of the Lord, supporting, supplying them, and ordering all for good to them. And they alone have a lively feeling of their infirmities, sigh and groan under the burden of their corruptions; are troubled for the indisposition and untowardness of their hearts. These
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and such as these, who are so inspired and affected, can *sing David's Psalmes with David's spirit*. Others may sing more pleasingly to the ear, but these alone make melody in the eares of the Lord, who looks at the heart.

Q. That's it we desire to be satisfied in, *How we may sing Davids Psalmes with Davids spirit.*

A. It is commonly, truly, and piously said, *We must sing Davids Psalmes with Davids spirit*, though there is no Text in the Bible, to my remembrance, that hath those very words; but some speak somewhat to this effect, as Col. 3. 16. *we must sing with grace in our hearts*, that is as much as if he should have said, *Sing Davids Psalmes with Davids spirit.*

2. We grant, it is impossible for any to sing Psalmes so, but one that is a new creature, renewed in the spirit of his minde, as *David was*.

3. We say in the general, to sing *Davids Psalmes with Davids spirit*, or to *sing with grace in our hearts unto the Lord*, there must be not onely an habituall, but an actuall disposedness: as when a man sets

sets upon any duty, he must stir up the *grace that is in him*; so it is not enough in singing Psalmes, to have an habit of grace, but we must stir up, and act the gifts and graces of God within us. Here then this shall be the great question, How our spirits ought to be disposed when we are to sing, that we may so do it, as to give God the glory, and gain benefit to our own soules? Or, (which is all own) how we may sing *David's Psalmes with David's spirit*? Or, how we may sing *with grace in our hearts unto the Lord*? which is the Doctrine in the Text.

Now here I meet with that which is a very great scruple, and I beleieve hath taken and kept off many from singing of Psalmes. They know not how to accommodate passages in them; either those passages are no way sutable to their conditions; or, their affections many times are not sutable to those passages: and hence they conclude, they cannot sing them so as to praise or please God in them, and therefore resolve not to sing at all.

Further, when they say, we must sing *David's Psalmes with David's spirit* (if I mistake

64. *Singing of Psalmes*

mistake not) their meaning is, we must be in every respect, like *David*, and in the very same case that he was when he sung these Psalmes to the Lord. As for instance, the sixth Psalm was penned by *David*, when he was, or had been sick, therefore we cannot sing this Psalm when we are well, and in good health. So we cannot sing the fifty one Psalm, because (as we hope) many of us have not committed such foul sinnes as *David* had, *viç. Adultery, and murder.* So many of us have not had occasion to fly out of our Country as *David* had, upon which occasion he penned some of his Psalmes, as *Psal. 52. 54. 55. 56. 57. 120. &c.* So many of us have not a house to dedicate or purifie, as *David* had, when he penned the thirtieth Psalm, and therefore we may not sing that Psalm. To conclude, we must be in the same condition in every respect, as *David* was, when he penned those Psalmes, or else, it is impossible to sing them as *David* did; that is, *to sing Davids Psalmes with Davids spirit.*

This

This is that which many object, and scruple much at it; and yet it is nothing but a gross mistake of the Nature, Use, and End of this Duty of *singing Psalmes*; therefore to rectifie it, I shall not onely shew you, what is the Nature, End, and Use of *singing Psalmes*, but I shall give you some directions whereby you may see, how all and every of those Psalmes, and the severall passages in them may be applied to us for our use; and how we may sing them so, as to glorifie God, and to edifie our own soules; alwayes provided, that we have *grace in our hearts*, and that we stir up the grace of God that is in us.

The Psalmes of *David*, *Asaph*, &c. were written, as far as I understand, for a threefold end or use, *viz.*

1. For Instruction.
2. For Admonition.
3. For Praise and Thanksgiving.

Which you may, if you please, reduce to these two, *viz.* Glorifying God, Edifying our selves.

First, Instruction or Teaching.

Secondly, Admonition or Reproof.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, Thanksgiving, and praising the Lord.

Look into *Col. 3. 16. Teaching and admonishing your selves in Psalmes, &c.* there you have the ends of singing of Psalmes, and *speaking to your selves in Psalmes, &c.* as the words are in the Text. And though these three ends be distinct, yet I would not have you understand me so, as if they were alwayes divided: For even those Psalmes that are for Instruction, and Admonition, are also for Praise and Thanksgiving. Praising God, or giving thanks unto the Lord, and the glorifying of Gods great Name, is the end of all singing, as it is the end of all Duties. And though we distinguish praising of God from petitioning, yet I hope you think, that even our petitioning and begging of God those things we need, is a glorifying God, and a praising his Name; because therein we acknowledge God is the God of all our mercies and comforts, with whom is the well of life, and from whom is all our expectation. So when we pray to God, we do praise him; so when we hear

hear the Word, we do praise and glorifie God because therein we acknowledge God onely to be our King, our Judge, and Law-giver, profess our selves his servants, and whatsoever he commands us we will do: and thus in all duties we praise and glorifie God. For all the duties we do, are paying of our Homage, or acknowledging of our Fealty to God. And those that know not this, know not what they do when they go about any Duty. Therefore I say, if a Psalm be for Instruction or Admonition, yet notwithstanding it is to praise the Lord with. So we suppose there be some Psalmes that are Psalmes meerly for Instruction, Doctrinall Psalmes, yet we may sing them and others, not onely for our Admonition and Instruction, but to praise the Lord; as in *Psal. 106. 12. Israel (it is said) sang his praise.* These things premised, we shall now resolve the Case in hand.

The first End or
Use of singing

1. First, then I say, one main End of singing Psalmes is our Instruction and Admonition, when

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we in singing have sweet meditations upon that heavenly matter that is sung. That is (I say again) one main end of singing Psalmes, *viz. Teaching and admonishing our selves in Psalmes, Col. 3. 16.* For when we are singing a Psalm of Instruction, we are thereby admonished of our evils, and also taught, what is our duty. Besides which place, I urge the Title of some of *David's Psalmes, Maschil of David, Psal. 142, 60. 32, 42, 45, 53, 55, 56, 74. &c.* That is, *A Psalm of David to give Instruction.* So *Junius* and *Tremellius* do alwayes (if I do not wrong them) render it, *A song to teach.* They are Psalmes especially to teach, and to give Instruction. But further, if there were nothing else, yet this also were an argument sufficient to shew that teaching and admonishing is one end of our singing Psalmes; namely, that some Psalmes are meerly Doctrinall, and you have not any formal expression of prayer, or praise in them; in many of the Psalmes indeed there be most heavenly patheticall formes of praise and prayer: but some Psalmes are meerly Doctrinall,

as the first Psalm; there is no one form of prayer, or of praise in it; but the whole Psalm, if you mark it, is nothing else but a doctrinall description of the different and contrary estate of the godly and wicked in this life, and in the life to come; as ver. 1. *Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornfull; but his delight is in the Law of the Lord, &c. He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of waters, his leaf shall not wither, and whatsoever he doth shall prosper. But the ungodly are not so, but are like chaff, &c. the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, and the way of the ungodly shall perish, &c.* Here is no formall expression of praise or prayer, though the Prophet penned and sung it to the praise of God. So the second Psalm is a Psalm of Instruction and Admonition, but there are no formes of prayer or praise, unless you reckon that for one, *viz. Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine Inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.* Now the doctrine of that psalm

is briefly this, The peremptory decree and purpose of God to set up the Kingdome of Christ in spite of the world, the vanity of all mens devices in opposition to it, the miserable confusion of all Christs enemies and opposers, and the blessed condition of such as submit themselves to him. Now these Psalmes being merely doctrinall, and having nothing but Instruction and Admonition in them, and being sung as well as others to the praise of God; hence (I say) one end of our singing them, is to learn the Doctrine of them, that it may be imprinted upon our spirits, or a sweet meditation in our hearts upon that heavenly doctrine contained in those Psalmes, to imprint it upon our mindes and memories, that we may be the more affected with it. Some Psalmes are mixed, and but in part doctrinall, as *Psalm. 33. and 34.* *The Angell of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him. The Lions shall lack and suffer hunger, but those that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing, &c.* These are doctrines of Gods providence and care over his people; and one main work

work of our hearts and spirits, in singing these and such like passages, is to meditate upon those Doctrines; and in so doing, we give glory to God, teaching and admonishing our selves in a Psalm, *Col. 3. 16.*

Object. But we may as well read them, and so meditate on them for our Instruction, Therefore there is no necessity that we should sing Psalmes for that reason.

Sol. I deny not, but we ought to read the Psalmes as any other Scriptures, and in and after our reading, to meditate upon them. In commending of singing, I do not cry down reading: One good duty should not shut out another. So because we read the Psalmes, and meditate on them, it doth not follow, that therefore we should not sing the Psalmes and meditate on them.

2. In singing there is a more distinct, settled, and fixed meditation of the heart, than there can be in reading; therefore *David* in the 104 Psalme, insisting upon the power and Providences of God in making and govern-

ing the world, he draws to a close of it in the 34 Verse, professing his joy in the Lord, from the consideration of Gods power and providence, *I will sing unto praise to my God, while I have my being: the Lord as long as I live, I will sing* Why? *Unto God that made me, that made all the world, that maintains my soul in life.* And then he adds, *My meditation of him shall be sweet, and I will be glad in the Lord.* David would not onely speak of the works of Gods power, and Providence, but he would sing of them, *that his meditations might be sweet.* Therefore, though we read the Psalmes, yet we ought also to sing them sometimes, because there is more sweetness of meditation in singing, than in reading or the bare reciting of them. In singing there is a dilating of the sound, and a drawing out of the voice which gives us more time for the fixing of our hearts upon that which is sung, in a more sweet meditation of the goodness or power of God, or whatsoever the matter be.

Therefore

Therefore the Mercies of the Lord, and the great things that God hath done in the world, have been commemorated with singing. The people of God did not think it enough to say what God had done for them, but they did sing it, that they might meditate the more upon the goodness of God, and be the more affected with it.

3. It is not enough for us to meditate, as *David* intimates in that place, but we must have sweet meditations of him, that we may be glad in the Lord, *I will be glad in the Lord*. When we sing, there is a more than ordinary raising or lifting up of our soules, and so farre more sweetness in meditation on what is sung, than what is barely said. The soule (I say) in singing is as it were, elevated and raised, and so comes to be more ravisht with admiration of what God hath done.

Let them who have had experience of communion with God in this duty speak, whether they have not found a great raising of their hearts in it? whether they have not been rapt and ravish-

ed, as it were, with the consideration of Gods goodness in his Promises, and the works of his spirituall and gracious Providences. I say not, that meditation is all the end of singing Psalmes, but this is one chief end.

Obj. Therefore if you say, why may we not read and meditate without more ado?

Ans. I answer, we may, and must read; But why not the other also? since it is more usefull, and helps to more sweetness in meditation. A man may pray in his heart without moving his lips, as *Hanna* did: but thou shalt finde it a quickening in prayer, if thou use thy tongue also; the voice is a great matter to quicken us in prayer, and to keep our hearts in order. Therefore, as I would have men pray in secret, so (were I to advise them) I would have them use their voice too; provided alwayes, it be not to be heard of men onely. So here also whereas men say, we may read a Psalm, as well as sing it. I answer, Singing will affect us more than reading, as praying with the voice doth affect us more

more than when we pray, and do not use our tongues; you shall finde, your hearts will be more apt to wander, if you do not use your voice, than they will be if you do.

Therefore as we should use our voice to help us in prayer, so why should we not lift up the voyce in singing, that we may be helped also in our meditation, even with enlargement, and ravishment of spirit. Questionless the lifting up of the voyce is a great help to enlarge the heart when it is well affected.

Now when people complain, and say, their hearts are not suteable to such and such passages in the Psalmes, nor those passages to their hearts:

I say, That there is no passage in all *David's* Psalmes, but thou mayest accommodate it, if no otherwise, yet in this way, *viz.* by a sweet meditation upon it. And I would fain know where that passage is, that a gracious spirit may not have sweet meditation upon it; surely thou hast a very ungracious heart, if thou canst not do this. If there be such a Psalm, or such passage of a Psalm, as thou thinkest,

thinkest thou canst no way bring it to thy condition, yet (I say) thou maiest bring thy heart to that Psalm, or to that passage, by a sweet meditation upon it. And I would fain know where that good Christian is, that will deny it to be his duty to have sweet meditations upon *David's Psalmes*, or any passage in them. Is there, (think you) any passage in *David's Psalmes*, that a Christian may not meditate upon, and so take comfort in God, and his word ?

And so you may be satisfied about the Historical Psalmes, and those passages in them that have respect to other men, and other times.

As near as I can, I shall instance in some of all kindes; some Psalmes are onely Doctrinall, some are onely Historically, as the 78 Psalm, the 105 and 106 Psalm, &c. For the 105 and 106 Psalmes, there are these passages in them, How God fed his people with Manna or bread from heaven, how he divided the Sea, how he drowned *Pharaoh* and his host; also a relation of the severall plagues which God sent upon
Egypt

Egypt, and the like, which I need not repeat. Beloved, is not this matter of meditation to us *Christians*? If thou hast a gracious frame of Spirit, suppose this is the Psalm that is to be sung, *Psal.* 105. or 106.

First thou maist apply this to thy case thus, to have sweet meditations on the matter of Fact, the great things that God did for the preservation of his people by the destruction of his enemies; and if thou canst sweetly meditate upon that, thou hast a word of Instruction, a word of consolation, and a word of Admonition.

1. A word of Instruction, to teach thee the care that God hath had of his people in all Ages.

2. A word of consolation to shew how God will deliver his people, and provide for them in their greatest extremities.

3. A word of admonition, to take heed how thou vex and persecute the people of God, as *Pharaoh* did, lest God bring destruction upon thee, as he did upon him.

Now

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Now is this nothing to thee ? you read these Psalmes , and you think you read them with profit, and why may you not sing them with profit, by a sweet meditation upon the matter , for your Admonition, consolation, Instruction, according as the matter is ? We read the History of the Bible for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scripture might have hope, not thinking, that what is related concerning them onely who lived in those times, But what God did then, he doth now, the people of God are as they were then, have the same afflictions, and temptations, are in the same conditions, hated and persecuted in the world, and have the same experience of Gods Goodness. Therefore it is a wicked ignorance to say, that many passages in the Psalmes do not concern us; *All things that were written, were written for our learning, that we might have comfort and hope.* God said to Joshua, *I will never leave thee nor forsake thee.* And the Apostle applies it, *Hebr. 13. 5.* to every Christian. When God speaks to Joshua,

Joshua, *I will never leave thee*, God speaks it to thee, and me, and every Christian in the world. and when God destroyed *Pharaoh*, it assures the people of God, that God will destroy all the *Pharaohs* in the world as well as he did him. There is nothing therefore in Scripture but doth concern thee and me as much as it concerned the people of God in those times; and every Christian that hath wit and grace may accommodate them for the edification of his own soul. If God provided for them, and fed them with bread from heaven, God will provide also for thee, and feed thee with bread from heaven, if there be cause. So in *David's time* it was said, *The Lions shall lack and suffer hunger, but they that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing.* And doth not this concern us as much as *David*, and others of the people of God then? It was so then, and it shall be so now; *The Lions shall lack and suffer hunger, But those that fear the Lord shall lack no good thing.* These things therefore were all recorded for our Learning.

Suppose

Suppose again you sing that 105 Psalm, all along there is work for thy faith; if thou have faith in thy heart (I say) there is matter for thy faith to work upon: all the providences of God there, are as so many props to keep thy heart in assurance that God will protect and defend thee, and provide for thee, as ever he did for his people in those times. What is that Scripture therefore, that doth not concern any childe of God? So in the 105 Psalm *Joseph* was put in the stocks, and the iron entred into his soul, till the time that his word came, the word of the Lord tried him: Doth this concern *Joseph* alone? certainly it concerns us as much as *Joseph*. It was penned many years after *Joseph* was dead and gone, and it concerns us still to think and meditate of the wonderfull providences of God, how his children are brought down, as *Joseph* was, even into the prison, and into the stocks; and how by abusing them, God makes way to honour and advance them; and how, by unlikely means he brings about great things; are not these things worth

worth meditation? how God doth try and exercise his people with heavy afflictions, and yet when he hath laid them low, he raises them up again, as he did *Joseph* :

You have the Israelites murmuring and repining against the Lord ; and what doth this concern us, will you say ? I say, very much, because we have the same spirit lustling to evil as they had, the same spirit of pride, and hypocrisie, and infidelity, in us as was in them. Now then we may meditate upon these passages, and reflect upon our own hypocrisie and infidelity, and distrust of Gods providence; and withall, take notice how the infidelity of men doth not, cannot make void the faithfulness of God, but he is gracious to his people for his promise sake, notwithstanding their dayly infirmities.

For the 137 Psalm, *By the waters of Babylon we sate down*, &c. It yields matter of sweet meditation to this purpose, how God many times exposes his people to be persecuted, afflicted, and then also to be mocked and flouted too. It is an Admonition to us, that we are no
more

more affected with the calamities and sufferings of the Church of God; and that we must not rejoyce and make merry at such times as the people of God are afflicted. It instructs us also, that the peace and prosperity of the Church of God is to be preferred above all worldly comforts whatsoever. And now I would know what Psalm, or passage in any Psalm doth not minister matter of sweet meditation for our admonition, instruction, or consolation. Therefore when some cry out, What is this or that to them? it doth not concern them, nor can they accommodate or apply it to themselves; I ask what's the matter they cannot? or where lies the fault? Is it not in the deadness and barrenness of their own hearts, who can let pass such precious matter, without due meditation on it?

Obj. That meditation you speak of may be as well in reading as in singing the Psalmes,

Sol. I denied that before, and say again, That there is a great advantage to meditation in singing of a Psalm,
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more then their is in the reading it, both to affect the heart, and raise it up, and also to make an impression of what is sung upon our soules. All Scripture is equall as to the Authority, and to the matter too, if it be absolutely considered, yet in respect to our consolation or direction, some parts of it may be preferred before others: So the book of Psalmes is a little Bible, or (if I may so call it) the Bible of the Bible ; as one star differeth from another in glory , so may we say of the Scriptures, some parts of it are more excellent, in respect of our necessities, than others, and yet all are excellent, and usefull, and of divine Authority: so I may say of singing and reading the Psalmes, both are usefull; yet it will not follow, but singing at some times may be more usefull for some purposes. As for instance; it is more usefull (as I have shew'd) for sweet rejoicing in God & his word with gladness of heart.

By this time (somewhat I hope) hath been said towards the satisfying of those that pretend they know not how to apply many passages in *David's* Psalmes. I say again, if there were no other

other way of applying them, they may do it this way, *viz.* by a sweet meditation on them, or by exercising their hearts with holy delight and rejoycing in meditating on Gods word. I say not, this is the onely way of accommodating them, but this is one, and I think, a good one too; there being no passage in any Psalm, but may be applied and made use of this way. I cannot but remember you what a reverend man now alive, saith in this case :

“Tis ignorance of a man’s self, and
 ” the wayes of God to think any Psalm
 ” is unsutable to any mans condition, if
 ” he be a good Christian especially.
 ” Some Psalmes set forth the Attributes,
 ” Excellencies and Works of God and
 ” his Christ. These minister occasion of
 ” reverence, blessing, praising, admiring,
 ” and adoring God. Some set forth the
 ” the Estate and wayes of the Church
 ” and people of God ; some their miseries,
 ” calamities, sorrows, and sufferings ;
 ” these offer to us matter of compas-
 ” sion, instruction, imitation : some set
 ” forth the estate and wayes of wicked
 ” men

"men; and in these we have a word of
 "admonition, some are excellent to ex-
 "press our own affections, afflictions,
 "sufferings, comforts, and then a man is
 "furnisht with matter and words to pre-
 "sent his own condition before the Lord.

It is a great mistake to think, I may not sing a Psalm, because it expresseth not my condition or affection: say, it doth not, as for instance, Thou art not sick, or sensible of Gods wrath, as *David* was, when he penned the sixth Psalm; or thou hast not committed adultery and murther, as *David* had done when he penned the one and fiftieth Psalm; or thou hast not a house to dedicate, as he had, when he penned the thirtieth Psalm; or thou art not put to it as he was when he changed his behaviour before *Abimelech*, and then afterwards penned the thirty fourth Psalm: what then? Wilt thou not therefore sing these Psalmes, or dost thou think, they do not concern thee? Thou mayst as well forbear to read them upon the same grounds; yea, thou mayest as well forbear to read some parts of *Paul's* Epistles, because thou never travelledst

velledst in *Asia*, or hadst to do with *Alexander* the Coppersmith, or foughtst with beasts at *Ephesus*, or leftest a cloak at *Troas*, as *Paul* did. There's no necessity, when we read those Scriptures, that we should be in every respect as *Paul* was that penned them; we read them to learn out of them what the holy Ghost hath recorded for our learning; and so we sing the Psalmes, that do not set forth our conditions in particular for our instruction, admonition, consolation, there being no Psalm, or part of a Psalm, that hath not somewhat for our learning.

This may serve to satisfie them who are afraid they lie in singing those passages of the Psalmes, which do not expresse their condition in particular.

It is no lie in a godly mans mouth to sing this passage in the sixth Psalm, *I am weary with my groaning, all the night make I my bed to swim, &c.* If it be a lie to sing, it is as much a lie to say it, and then we must not read that Psalm for fear of lying. But we sing it, as we read it, for the good doctrine that may be

be learnt from it, *viz.* That when God rebukes and chastens in displeasure, no poor soul is able to abide it; That the sence of Gods wrath is more grievous to be born than any other burden whatsoever; That in our repentance and turning to God, there ought to be very great sorrow, arising from the sence of Gods wrath due to sin, and that our sorrow for sin ought to be the greatest of all other, &c. As for that place, *Psal.* 6.6. the expression is (as I take it) hyperbolicall, and intended to express what heat there is in the fire of Gods wrath, such and so great, as it even melted *David* into tears: He was exceedingly grieved, and wept abundantly, and so do many of Gods servants many times, and therefore may say, as *David* did, *We make our beds to swim*, &c. Or, say it was the greatness of his bodily affliction that made him to weep so abundantly and excessively, yet we may learn something from it, as I shewed even now: sure *all Scripture is written* (as the Apostle saith, *Rom.* 15.4.) *for our learning*. Thou canst not in every respect say as *Paul*,
2 Tim.

2 Tim. 4. 8. *I am ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand &c.* And yet thou thinkest it not a lie in thy mouth to recite those words when thou readest that Chapter. Few Christians (I (fear) are come so far as to say with the Apostle, *Phil. 1. 23. I am willing to depart. and to be with Christ, &c.* yet any Christian may read that passage without danger of lying (as I suppose:) Sure I am, there's matter of consolation and instruction in it to every Christian. Say thy heart falls short of that ardent love to God and his law which *David* expresseth, *Psal. 119.* yet it is no more lie to sing than to read that Psalm, specially if thou have a gracious heart, although thou hast not attained that measure and degree of love to Gods Law as *David* had. Nay, suppose thou hast no love to Gods Law at all, yet thou hast there a word of admonition and Instruction, teaching thee what thou shouldst do; and thou mayest take occasion to lament and bewail the untowardlines of thine own heart, that when *David* loved Gods Law so exceedingly, Thou hast no love or liking to it.

I confess

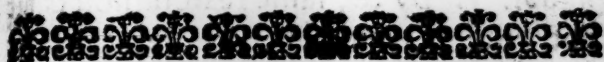
I confels we must be in some respects as *David* was when he penned those Psalmes ; that is, in the state of grace If we will sing them right , and as we ought. But it is no lie to sing them how- ever ; for if it be, then it is a lie to say, and a lie to read them ; and so you must not read the sixth Psalm, if you do not *water your couch with your tears*, as *David* did.

Now I say, for a conclusion, Suppose there be some passages we cannot make our own by using them for our selves, and in our own names, as *David* did, yet we may make them our own by a sweet meditation on them for our benefit and edification, and by using them also (as one saith well) for, and in the behalf of others that are of the same mysticall body with our selves, that so we may rejoyce with them that rejoyce, and weep with those that weep, as (saith he) there is scarce any passage of the Psalmes, but it either concerns our selves, or some other of the Church of God , who at this day are, or may be in the same , or in the like case, and condition

condition as *David* or the Church of God, was then ; whom we are to remember as if we were in bonds with them, or to bless God for, as if we were in like prosperity with them.

He that reads the Scriptures, or sings a Psalm, or doth any duty without reverence, attention, good affection, and some good use made of the same, he takes Gods Name in vain.

This is granted. But to say, as some do, that others ly in singing such Psalmes, as do not expresse their own conditions in every particular, is (as far as I understand) a belying or slandering them ; and, I wish they may well consider it, for (as I have said) a wicked man lies as much in reading as in singing of a Psalm, though indeed it be not lying, but reporting or reciting what God hath revealed in his word for Admonition and Instruction to all men. You have now seen one end and use of singing Psalmes ; and if there were no more, I conceive, it is well worth the while.



SERMON IV.

Ephes. 5. 19.

Speaking to your selves in Psalmes and Hymnes, and spirituall Songs, Singing, &c.

I Have shewed it to be a Christians duty to sing *David's Psalmes*, answering many objections by the way, and acquainting you how a gracious spirit may apply and make use of every passage in them. I shall now proceed to shew how Christians may apply some passages in particular to their own cases. Onely let me first answer a scruple or two, which some have, in regard of some passages in *David's Psalmes*.

Obj. I cannot sing the 131 Psalm, will some one say, for I finde much pride and haughtiness in my heart, how then should I sing, *Mine heart is not haughty, nor mine eyes lofty?*

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Sol.

92 *Singing of Psalmes.*

Sol. 1. By the same reason thou canst not read it, and say, *My heart is not haughty, &c.*

2. If thou art a Christian indeed, thy heart is not haughty, as the heart of a naturall man is haughty.

3. Say thine heart is more haughty than becomes a Christians heart to be (I know no mans heart but is so) there is a word of admonition and instruction, to minde thee of that evill, and humble thee for the pride of thy heart.

Obj. But thou hast a proud heart still.

Sol. So thou hast perhaps, after much and earnest prayer to God against it, and many admonitions from the Word preached. *David* himself shewed pride, or somewhat as bad, when upon a false suggestion, *2 Sam.* 16. 4. he presently sequestered all *Mephibosheth's* estate, before he heard what he had to say for himself. Besides, there's a sweet close of that Psalm, wherein *David* gives himself and others a seasonable admonition, particularly and quietly to wait upon God, *Let Israel hope in the Lord, from henceforth and for ever.*

obj.

Obj. But how can we sing such passages of the Psalmes, as are nothing but exhortations to singing? This is giving to God his exhortations again (say some) and leaving the duty undone. Take Gods words he speaks to us, and speak them to God again.

Sol. 1. By the same reason *David* did not praise God in singing those exhortations to praise him, The 48, 49. and 50th Psalmes are almost nothing else but exhortations to praise God; shall we say, that *David*, or whosoever was the penman, did not praise God in those Psalmes? And yet I think, the Argument will hold as well for the one as for the other.

2. There's somewhat in those exhortations to admonish us of our dulness, and what need we have to be stirred up, to do that duty which all creatures owe, and in a sort yield unto the Lord their Maker.

3. As praying is the best preparation to prayer, for then (as *Luther* saith) we set upon it in Gods strength and not in our own: So singing these exhortations is an excellent means to prepare and

raise our hearts ; and therefore *David* begins and concludes many Psalmes with such Exhortations, as *Psal.* 136. &c.

4. We may say of such exhortations, as one saith of the 136 Psalm, that it is *Solemnis celebratio nominis Dei sub exhortationis forma*. 'Tis an excellent way of praying God, to provoke and call upon our selves to praise him. What if a man in prayer speak to his own heart, and call upon himself to rouse and raise up his spirits, as *David*, *Psal.* 5. 7, 8. *Awake my glory*, &c. may he not be well said to pray when he doth so? And why may he not as well be said to praise God, when he stirs up himself to that duty?

But to speak as the thing is, such forms are nothing but elegancies of expression, in the use of which we do indeed praise the Lord ; and this if our opposites had understood, we had never been put to the trouble of answering such an Objection.

A second use of
sign; Psalmes.

And now I shall proceed to inform weak Christians how they may more especially improve some passages in *David's* Psalmes, as they are more
futeable

suteable to their particular respective conditions or affections ; and this is a second use to be made of singing, *viz.* the exercise and improvement of the graces of God in us.

For instance, perhaps thou art reported to say or do that which never entred into thy heart to conceive or think of, what comfort is there to thy soul in singing the former part of the seventh Psalm, and other like places, wherein *David* complains of the same abuse? Suppose all goes against thee, and thou hast no visible means of relief, how pertinent-ly mayest thou sing the eleventh Psalm? When there is no faith, nor truth, nor trust in men, then I hope it is no hurt to sing the twelfth Psalm, *Help Lord, for the godly man ceaseth*, &c. When wicked men flourish, and the godly are afflicted, how proper is it to sing the 37 Psalm, and meditate, and apply those precious promises to confirm thy faith, and comfort thy self in a patient waiting upon God? If thy afflictions and affections are the same as *David's* and other holy

mens were, thou mayest apply to thy self with much comfort such passages of the Psalmes as do particularly concern thee in thy condition, whatsoever it be, and so act the grace of God in thee.

If thou art a Christian, shouldest thou not admire and adore the Attributes and Excellencies of God and his Christ? and how canst thou do it better than in singing *David's* Psalmes? Wouldst thou (for instance) admire the work of God in exalting Jesus Christ to be a Prince and a Saviour) sing the 8, and 95, 96, 97, 98, and 99th Psalmes. Do the sufferings of Christ, and the fruits of them belong unto thee? then thou maist well sing the 22^d Psalm. Hast thou experience of Gods support, supply, protection, direction? then thou mayest sing the 23^d Psalm, with many others. Doth it not concern us to admire the Power, wisdom, and goodness of God in the works of Creation and Providence? If it do, why should not we sing the first part of the 19 Psalm, and the 104 Psalm throughout? Hast thou any affection to the Word of God,

out

out of the experience thou hadst of the power of it on thy soul? why shouldst thou not sing the latter part of the 19 Psalm, and any part of the 119 Psalm? Hast thou any sence of sin, and wrath due to it? why mayest thou not sing the sixth, and 38 Psalmes? Psal. 3. *Lord, how are they increased that trouble me, &c.* So may all Gods people, for the most part say. If thou art one of them, then there's thy condition. *David*, when he was straitened by his enemies, goes to God, and so takes courage. Go thou and do likewise, and then there's thy affection to the same as his was.

Obj. But how can we sing such passages as are imprecations against wicked men?

Salut. Even these may be sung to good purpose, if our hearts be in a good tune.

1. We may meditate on them with fear and trembling at the wrath of God that hangs over the heads of all impenitent sinners.

2. We may work our hearts to patience and contentation, notwithstanding the present prosperity of wicked men,

in assured confidence that God will destroy them, and their foot shall slide in due time.

3. We may use them as prayers, not against our particular enemies, but against all the implacable and incurable enemies of Christ and his kingdome.

Now I cannot enough wonder, that any Christians should be so much wanting to themselves in that heavenly exercise of singing Psalmes, which gives them so much advantage of acquainting themselves more and more with God, in sweet meditations on his infinite and most glorious Excellencies. Indeed I do not wonder, if some men care not for singing of Psalmes, when I consider the course of their conversations. *David's* Psalmes were many of them penned for the use of Gods people when they are persecuted, how shall they that are more like *David's* enemies, violent, deceitfull, threatening, vexing, persecuting and mocking, sing those Psalmes? They may well forbear to sing them, seeing there are such testimonies and evidences against their ungodly practices in them.

We

We have some now adayes that will have no repentance, no humiliation, or sorrow for sin; others that slight the Scriptures, or written Word; and 'tis no wonder these men should not care to sing *David's* Psalmes, being not able to abide the test of them, whilst their affections, actions, and opinions, are so contrary to them. *David* in the 84 Psalm laments the want of publick Ordinances. I marvel not that they who slight all Ordinances, under a pretence of living above them, care not to sing that, or other Psalmes. Whatever some men may dream, I make no question but others have found God graciously revealing himself unto their soules in this Exercise: yea; I believe that godly men (who are such indeed) have scarcely seen more of God in any Exercise than in this. To my thinking, there is not a more lively resemblance of heaven upon earth, than a company of godly Christians singing a Psalm together.

But that which is most strange (and 'tis a hard case indeed) is this, that never a passage can be found in all the Psalmes
which

which will sute with some mens affecti-
ons or occasions. If some do not, yet
methinks others might; and yet they
that except against some (if I mistake
not) refuse all; so that it seems, there is
nothing in them that will serve their
turn, or suit with their conditions.

Obj. Yes, it will be said, there are
some Psalmes, or parts of Psalmes, that
suit well enough with our conditions,
affectiions, and occasions, but that which
fits us well enough, is nothing so fit for
others.

Sol. 1. There are severall uses of the
Psalmes, as there are of other Scriptures;
why may we not in singing as well as
in hearing, apply to our selves that
which is most pertinent to our proper
cases? and so, those that are not in the
same condition, may yet profitably sing
the same Psalm, even as they may hear
the same Sermon. Besides, all the
Psalmes, and every part of them, are fit-
ted to the occasions of all Gods people,
so as there is nothing but ministers
matter of sweet meditation, and praising
God by a holy rejoycing in him.

I know

I know not how well some Psalmes will sute with some mens affections or conditions. Once I am sure that Gods people from the beginning of the world to this day, have had cause, as to complain and pray, so to bleſs and praise the Lord in the very ſame manner, and upon the very ſame grounds as *David* did. Wherefore I beſeech all thoſe that fear God, to do what becomes them, *viz.* now and then to comfort and chear, and incourage themſelves, and one another in Psalmes, *Seek the Lord, and his ſtrength, ſeek his face continually* : ſeek him in prayer, and ſeek him too in ſinging of Psalmes ; ſay as *Luther* was wont upon occaſion, *Come, Sirs, lets ſing the 46 Psalm, and fear nothing.*

There are, that would deal by us, as he that firſt made his enemy blaſpheme God, and then preſently ſtabb'd him at the heart, that ſo he might kill both body and ſoul at once, and ſo take a brave revenge (as he call'd it.) So do theſe in a ſort; they vex us ſufficiently, with ſeeing and hearing their ungodly and Atheiſticall opinions and practiſes,
and

and they would deprive us of our comfort in God, by singing Psalmes to his praise. Lets sing the 119 Psalm however, and say, *It is time for thee, Lord, to work, for men have destroyed thy law.* And so lets sing the 12 Psalm, and others, that thereby our hearts may be cheared, and we may be confirmed in faith to wait with patience upon our God, saying, as in *Psal. 48. 14. This God is our God for ever and ever, he will be our guide even unto death.*

I shall conclude this with what *Perkins* saith on the eleventh of the *Hebrews*; he asks the question, why we sing those Psalmes now, which were appointed for the use of the Church in former times? and answer thus: *That the Church, in all ages, consisted of a company of believers, and their faith is alwayes one and the same; and this makes all that apprehend Gods promises, to be like to one another in graces, meditations, dispositions, affections, desires, spiritual wants in the feeling and use of afflictions, in course of life and conversation, and in performance of duties to God and man, and therefore*

therefore the same Psalmes, Prayers, and Meditations, are now as fit for the Church in these dayes, and are said and sung with the same use and profit to the Church in these dayes, as when they were made. Sure if it be a sufficient ground to reject singing of David's Psalmes; that they were penned for the use of Gods people in former ages, I know no reason, but that we may, for the same reason, take no notice of the other Scriptures, and say, What do they concern us? but I rather think, that there is no estate or condition wherein the people of God either are, or can be, but the holy Ghost foreseeing the same, hath prepared and recorded some Scripture-Psalmes suteable thereunto. And those Psalmes being chosen out according to the new occasions of Gods people, & sung by them with new hearts, will ever be found new Songs. Words of eternall truth (as one saith) are ever new, and never old. Dayly and hourly mercies are new mercies to renewed hearts (*Lament. 3. 23. His mercies are new every morning*) and when they praise the Lord for those mercies,

mercies, there's a new song of praise put into their mouthes. And when God hath furnisht us with Psalmes, and Songs fram'd by his own Spirit to the purpose, nothing (for ought I know) but wretched ignorance and prophaneness will neglect to use them.

The objection of singing Psalmes composed by our selves and others, I have already answered, and shewed the absurdity of such a practice, unless we had any of an extraordinary spirit; which if there be, let us once see it, and I make no question but we shall willingly acknowledg, the gift of God in them.

A third Use of singing Psalmes.

A third use of singing *David's* Psalmes, is a joyfull praising of God, or expressing our joy in the Lord: when a man is merry, naturally, and of course (as we say) he will laugh, leap, sing and dance; as when a man is sorry, contrariwise he is fullen, sits still, hangs the head, and saith nothing, Psal. 126. 2. *Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing.* Exod. 15. 1. *Then sang Moses and the children of Israel.* So Mary, and Zachary, and Simon, Luke 1. & 2. brake forth

forth into Songs upon the apprehension of Gods wonderfull goodness.

Obj. That was because the Spirit of God came upon them in an extraordinary manner.

Sol. We deny not but the Spirit of God was upon some of them in a more than ordinary manner ; but yet it was not so upon them all, all the children of *Israel* that sang with *Moses* had not an extraordinary spirit, onely they were for the time much affected with the Work of God in their deliverance, and the destruction of the Egyptians, 2 *Chro.* 20. 27, 28. So *Jehoshaphat* and the men of *Judah* came to *Jerusalem* with Psalteries and Harps, and Trumpets unto the house of the Lord (no question but there was singing also) when the Lord had made them to rejoice over there enemies ; and yet no more extraordinary spirit on them, than on Gods people now upon the like occasion. Their practice was a precedent for Gods people in all ages to do the like, when ever their hearts are enlarged in the apprehension of Gods goodness, to break forth into singing, and an holy rejoycing before the Lord.

Lord. How do we answer the goodness of God unto us, if there be not affections and expressions futeable to his dispensations? We all allow shooting off great gunns, ringing of bells, &c. and why not as well singing of Psalmes?

When we come to the Congregation, one end of our singing is to expresse our joy in the Lord, for such mercies as his Word and Sacraments, and means of Grace; and that God hath given us his Sabbath and such solemn times; and therefore we come before him with singing, that so we may praise the Lord with gladness of heart, The 100 Psalm is called a Psalm of praise, and the 95 Psalm begins thus: *O come let us sing unto the Lord, &c.* If you read the 96, 97, and 98. you will finde many expressions to the same purpose. Whatever were the occasion of penning those Psalmes, it is clear, that the holy Ghost in them had respect to the Gospell-times, when all the ends of the earth should *see the salvation of God*, Psal. 98.3. Heb. 4. The Apostle shews it plainly of the 95th Psalm, that the Holy Ghost in it speaks of
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the times after Christ was come in the flesh. Now if the promise, and their expectation of those glorious Gospel-dayes, did so rejoyce their hearts, how much more should we be affected, so as to sing and rejoyce at a higher rate than they did? How comely and pleasant a thing is it to sing a Psalm (as Christ and his disciples did) after our receiving the Sacrament, when God hath honoured us so much, as to admit us unto his Table, and given in the tokens and pledges of his love to our soules? And after Sermon too, why should we not sing and rejoyce, when we have understood the good word of God declared to us by his messengers, *Nehem. 8. 12.* *Nehemiah* and *Ezra* and the Levites willed the people to rejoyce upon such an occasion; and good reason, since the Word of God is sweet to every soul that savours it; and so our Sabbaths are speciall times of rejoycing in God, because the opportunities of publick Ordinances are renewed upon us.

Object. But you sing all dayes alike,
fasting

fasting and feasting dayes, without any difference.

sol. For answer to this question) which some think unanswerable) I acknowledge that singing is a most proper expression of joy, *Jam. 5. 13. Is any merry, let him sing.* But it will never follow from that place, that we must not sing when we are sorry : for then it will as well follow, that when we are not afflicted we must not pray. That place (I say) will infer the one as well as the other.

I do not say, that all Psalmes are fit for all occasions, but there must be a choice made; and to make that choice, there is some understanding more than ordinary required in him that appoints the Psalmes to be sung.

3. As singing is proper in times of mirth, so it is not altogether improper in times of mourning; and though this may seem strange, yet it is most true, and I prove it thus. Because Gods people were wont to lament themselves and others in Songs; so *Jeremy* lamented the sad estate of *Judah*, *David's* Psalmes were penned in times
of

of great distress and danger, as appears by the many dolefull complaints in them. The 102^d Psalm is entituled, *A prayer of the afflicted when he is overwhelmed, &c.* and 130 Psalm begins, *Out of the depths have I cried unto thee, O Lord.* To clear it yet further, give me leave a little to discourse the nature of Musick, which is somewhat strange in this respect, That it will sute with different, yea contrary affections. Some Philosophers conceited the soul to be an Harmony once, the soul of the world is a symmetry of all the parts made in number, weight, and measure. Certainly of all sensible things, there is none so much affects the soul, as melodious sounds; I say, nothing affects the soul so much, be a man merry or sorry. If he be merry, it will provoke him to more mirth, raise & rouse his spirits more than they were before. Therefore singing is very proper when we are joyed, & would praise the Lord with gladness of heart. If a man be sad, musick will set it on, and make him more Melancholique than he was before, so some understand
Prov.

Prov. 25. 20. *As he that taketh away a garment in cold weather, and as vinegar upon nitre, so is he that singeth songs to an heavy heart.* I conceive the meaning to be this, If when a man is in heaviness, one should come to him in a lightsome, gamesome manner, (as if *Job's* friends had brought minstrells and Musick with them) he would vex and distemper, and increase his grief the more. Certainly Musick, as it may be ordered, will provoke mourning; hence the custome grew of solemnizing Funeralls with Musick. So when the Rulers daughter was dead, there were Minstrells among others; and if any say, That was to allay, and not to increase their grief, I desire them to look *Jer. 9. 17, 18.* and there they may see that there were cunning women, who profest an art of mournfull Ditties, and were hired on purpose to enhance affections of that kinde in others. So *2 Chron. 35. 25.* The singing-men and women spoke of *Josiah* in their lamentations. For certain, a dolefull sad Ditty sadly sung, will never make any laugh, unless it be an errant fool.

So

So a fit Psalm (a penitentiall Psalm you may call it, if you please) sung to a sad tune , is as apt to melt and move our hearts upon a day of humiliation, as any exercise we can use, and an apt expression also of such affections as should be in us upon such an occasion. Some have sung for sorrow, as *David* penn'd and sang many Psalmes when his heart was as full of grief and anguish as it could hold, and so he eas'd and breath'd his heart by pouring it out before the Lord in a dolefull Song, lamenting his sad condition. And why may not we as well lament our own and others sad conditions , in singing of *David's* Psalmes? some of which you know are sad complaints of his miseries and sufferings , mixt with earnest prayers for deliverance. Sure *David* was not very merry when he sang many of his Psalmes; whence I gather we may sing even when we are sorry, and so lament and bemoan our selves before the Lord.

Besides, if our hearts be very sad indeed , singing may revive them, since
all

all utterance is an ease to any grief. So some conceive that Christ chose to sing a Psalm after supper, thereby to chear up his own heart, and his Disciples also. Musick certainly will allay passions, *1 Sam. 16. v. 14. An evil spirit from the Lord troubled Saul*, ver. 20. And when *David plaid on his harp, the evil spirit departed from him*. Not that there is any efficacy in Musick to drive away devils, but because in a naturall way it disposed and settled *Saul* for ease, by raising up his heart and spirit out of his melancholy dumps, tempering his rage, and moderating his griefs and discontents, by which the Devil took advantage to drive him into frenzy fits and furies. If by *spirit*, in that place, we understand (as some) onely that which is called *Motus animorum*, as a spirit of fear, a spirit of jealousy, &c. then questionless, the Musick had a naturall efficacy to recover *Saul* out of his melancholy moods. *2 King. 3. 15*. The Prophet *Elisha* finding some distemper in his spirit, occasioned by the presence of an idolatrous King, and the present distress
of

of Gods people, called for a musician to chear and compose his spirits, that he might be the better fitted for prophesie. Some have conceived and said, that the spirit of prophesie never came upon a sad soul. How true that is, I leave others to judge. Nor shall I contend if any say there was somewhat extraordinary and supernaturall in those cases. However, this I think may be gathered from them, That musick hath a vertue in it to compose, and quiet, and refresh, and chear the spirit of a man, when he is overgone with melancholy. So Gods people in times of distress and danger, when they feel themselves too much dejected and sadded, may chear themselves up by singing a Psalm together. As for our singing on fasting dayes (which some are offended at) we say as before, 'tis not so much to make our selves merry, as to move and melt our hearts. 'Tis no absurdity; nor impossibility neither, for Christians to sing with tears in their eyes.

When a day of thanksgiving comes, we sing to another tune, in way of rejoicing,

ing, exalting and triumphing in God our Saviour. On Sabbath and Lecture dayes we sing partly to expresse our joy in God, for giving us such opportunities and seasons of spirituall edification, by the use of his Ordinances; and partly to compose our spirits, and so fit them for hearing the Word preached. And this I conceive to be the reason, why commonly we sing a Psalm before Sermon.

Sermon



SERMON V.

Ephes. 5. 19.

*Speaking to your selves in Psalmes and
Hymnes, and spirituall Songs,
Singing, &c.*

ONe end (among others) of our singing of Psalmes is (as I shewed formerly) a joyfull praising of God, or expressing of our joy in the Lord, as Gods servants were wont to do when God in his Providence gave them occasion and matter of rejoycing by deliverances, victories, or any other mercies. I shall now adde to what hath been said, That it becomes Gods people when they come before him in publick, to serve the Lord with joy and an holy rejoycing; and for this end they must sing Psalmes; there being no exercise more proper to express our joy in the Lord. God calls his people to rejoyce evermore, 1 *Thessalon.* 5. 16.

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and *Phil.* 4. 4. to rejoyce alway; but more especially when they come before him in the use of his Ordinances, *Psal.* 105. 3. *Glory ye in his holy Name, let the heart of them rejoyce that seek the Lord,* *Deut.* 12. 12. *Ye shall rejoyce before the Lord, &c.* *Deut.* 14. 26. *Thou shalt eat before the Lord thy God, and thou shalt rejoyce,* *Deut.* 16. 10, 11. *Thou shalt keep the feast of weeks, i. e. Pentecost, with a tribute of a free-will offering of thine hands, and thou shalt rejoyce before the Lord thy God, &c.* And *Deut.* 28. 47. there is a threatening of judgement for this, that they served not the Lord with joyfulness and gladness of heart, &c. Not a filthy or fleshly rejoycing according to the courte of this world, but an holy and heavenly, such as when the very heart and soul is ravisht with a sense of Gods goodness. And this, as it doth very much help us in the duties we have to do, so it is expressly required, *Psal.* 100. 2. *Serve the Lord with gladness, come before his presence with singing.* *Psa.* 92. which is, (as the Title shews) a Psalm for the Sabbath, the Prophet gives this as a reason of that joyfull

joyfull solemnity, ver. 4. *For thou Lord hast made me glad through thy work, I will triumph in the works of thy hands.* The great work and business of the Sabbath, is to magnifie God, in regard of his great works, *vi^z*. Creation and Providence, but especially the great work of reconciling the world, and Redeeming sinners from death and hell by Jesus Christ. This great Work was compleated, on the day of Christs resurrection, which was the beginning of his exaltation, and then it becomes us to rejoyce in the Kingdome, Power, and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, singing to the Lord, *because he hath done marvellous things*; and saying, *This is the day which the Lord hath made*, let us rejoyce and be glad in it.

I say, 'tis suteable and seasonable to rejoyce and be merry on the Lords day, and therefore to sing, and so express our joy in the Lord, who hath made us to rejoyce in his salvation. God loves not to see us lumpish and melancholy, but chearfull and joyfull in his service: Let us therefore sing and say, *The Lord reigneth.*

▲ fourth 1st of singing
psalms. Zach. in loc.

One gives this as one end

and use of our singing of Psalmes, viz. That the Spirit dwelling in us, may be, as it were, excited and stirred up to put forth his power more effectually and plentifully; and grounds it upon my Text, which (saith he) imports two things: First, that singing is an effect of the Spirit. And secondly, That the Spirit is stirred up in us by singing. That which he saith, to my thinking, hath much reason in it: For why may not singing excite and stir up the spirit, and the graces of it in Christians, as well as the performance of other duties? They that have grace therefore do duty, that by exercising their graces they may improve them. Now let such as have any grace of God in them, consider how in doing this duty as it ought to be done, the graces of God (specially faith and hope) may be set on work, whilst we seriously meditate on the promises, and other passages of *David's* Psalmes.

A fifth Use of
singing Psalmes.

Once more, a Psalm is good sometimes to comfort our hearts when we are under affliction, as I hinted before, how *Paul* and *Silas* sang when they

they were under extream sufferings ; and *Luther* would encourage himself and others, when he heard any bad news of any attempts against the Gospel, and such as profest it, saying, *Let us sing the 46th Psalm, and let them do their worst.* Indeed that's a Psalm will chear a mans spirits, if he can sing it with understanding and grace in his heart. So did the Primitive Christians comfort themselves in prison by singing of Psalmes.

A sixth Use of
sing: 13 Psalmes.

Lastly, singing of Psalmes is an excellent way to praise God, and speak good of his Name. Many Psalmes (you know) are full of Gods praises, and set forth the wondrous works that he hath done, so as he may have the glory of them. To praise God, and bless his Name, is the highest and most excellent service we can do on earth ; it comes nearest to the exercise of the Saints in heaven, who are alwayes praising God in the admiration of his infinite and incomprehensible Glory. Now singing of Psalmes is an excellent way of praising God. One saith, that in singing there is a more copious

and ample profession of piety. Not as if God who is a Spirit, were delighted with any sensible thing, as Musick, or melodious tunes. But yet God is (as I may say) more delighted, when we are more ample and patheticall in pouring out our soules to him in praise, 2 *Sam. 6. David* (it is said) danced before the Lord with all his might, and then *Michol* scorned and flouted him, as some do us now adayes for our singing of Psalmes, which yet is but a praising the Lord with all our might. And indeed, to speak as the thing is, the glory of God is held forth more illustriously in singing of Psalmes (as one observes) because the praises of God are celebrated with greater attention and affection, than if they were barely recited with a lower voice. Wherefore the Levites upon all occasions sung the praises of the Lord, and so did all Gods people also. No Prince (as he saith) or great Commander but thinks himself more honoured, if the great things they have done be commemorated and set forth in a Song, 1 *Sam. 18. 6, 7.* So the women went
out

out to meet *Saul*, with singing, and with Instruments of Musick. Now our great Champion and Captain Generall hath conquered sin and Satan, and all our spiritual enemies, we give him not the glory due unto his name, unless we celebrate the victory with Songs of deliverance.

That none of old sung, but such as had an extraordinary spirit, is false, as I shewed formerly, *Exod.* 15. All the children of *Israel* had not such a spirit, though *Moses* and *Miriam* had. In *Hezekiah's* time the Levites sung praises to the Lord with the words of *David* and *Asaph* the Seer; and so no question they did in *Jehoshaphat's* time also. As for the gift of Psalmes in the Primitive Churches, it went with the gift of tongues, and both are long since ceased; so as we may argue as well, that we must not say, because we have not the gift of Tongues, as that we must not sing, because we have not the gift of Psalmes. Besides, we finde no mention in Scripture of any Church-Officer for compiling of Psalmes, as for the Ministry of the

Word, and prayer. Nor hath God inspired any with a gift of Psalmistry to suite the occasions of the Churches from Sabbath to Sabbath. We finde neither Ordinance appointing, nor Providence granting it, nor any reason to silence *David's* Psalmes that others may be attended. We know who indited them, and we know too (which I wish may be duely considered) that some of them are proper to Gospell times. If any question it, let them read the 98th Psalm, and see, whether it be not more proper for Gods people now, than in the times of the old Testament.

Quest. But how may we sing *David's* Psalmes so as to attain those ends?

Sol. First, We must have grace in our hearts, or a gracious frame of spirit, such as *David* had. Singing praise to God is an exercise becoming Saints, who alone can do it so as to please God, and profit themselves in it, as was shewed before.

2. Secondly, Sing none but spirituall Songs, such as *David's* Psalmes are, and others composed by holy men of God, who

who spake as they were inspired by the Holy Ghost. These are altogether spirituall, for the Authour, for the Matter, and for the End and Use of them.

Quest. May we not sing any other Song composed by a common gift, so long as it is spirituall for the Matter?

Ans. It may be of ill consequence many wayes, to shut out *David's* Psalmes and take in our own; as,

First, We may mistake even in the Matter; whereas, we are sure, there is no such mistake in *David's* Psalmes.

Secondly, Some perhaps may not like so well of other Composures, whereas none but an Athiest will finde fault with the Psalmes that were penned by the Spirit of God; that I say not (what was said formerly) No mans Composures can be answerable to those of Gods Spirit. I rather think that such Psalmes (if any have them) should be fitter for their own private use than for the Churches of God; though for my part, I do not incourage any to the private use of them, with a neglect of *David's* Psalmes, but rather dissuade them

them from it. For other Songs (alwayes supposed that there be no vanity, nor filthiness, nor scurrility, nor reflectings upon other mens good name, which all Christians must be farre from) they may be for honest delight and recreation, for ought I know, even as a man may play a lesson on a Lute or other Instrument to refresh his Spirits.

Thirdly, Christians had need to watch their hearts exceedingly more than ordinarily when they are singing a Psalm. It requires a good measure of the Word and Spirit to pray in the Spirit, but more to sing in the Spirit, because (as one saith) our senses being delighted with the Melody, are apt to steal away our hearts from spiritual fervency. For certainly we are exceeding apt to be taken with the melody, and in the interim neglect our hearts, so as our spirits shall not work and be doing when our tongues are a singing, To remedy this, lets sing with understanding and attention of minde, in order to which it were a great happiness and help to devotion, if we knew the minde and meaning
of

of the holy Ghost in all that we sing.

Object. What if a man understand not the meaning of what he sings?

Sol. He cannot then sing, in every respect as he should do. But yet I shall offer this to your consideration, not peremptorily asserting it to the prejudice of any that may be otherwise minded. We all grant reading of the Scriptures, and hearing them read, to be an holy exercise, and that which God hath enjoined us. Yet when we read the Scriptures, I suppose, we many times meet with that which we do not so well understand, shall we not therefore read them at all? Or may we not for all this read them with profit, whilest we understand many things which we read, and by reading them again and again come to more understanding of the minde of God in them? And why may we not sing Psalmes for instruction and admonition that we may understand them? If thou meditate seriously, God may enlighten thee in the very singing. We reade and hear, to get more understanding, though sometimes we read and hear
what

what for the present we understand not, and so (for ought I know) we may sing also. Some, I am confident, have found by experience, that in singing of Psalmes they have come to more understanding of some passages, than ever they had before. But what Psalm is there that any understanding Christian knows not the main scope and sense of it, though he understand not every particular passage and expression in it? Certainly, he that hath a gracious heart cannot be ignorant of the main drift and scope of any of *David's* Psalmes. As we must sing with understanding, so must we sing with affection also, acting and exercising the grace of God that is in us, according as the matter that is sung gives us occasion. Sometimes we are to act faith and hope in God, sometimes holy desires after God, sometimes holy rejoycing in God, and sometimes holy fear and trembling before God. 'Tis not enough that we have grace, but we must act it. As for instance, when we sing that passage, Psalm 119.5. *O that my waye were directed to keep thy statutes.* The desires
of

of our soules should be such as *David's* were, to obey God in every thing to the utmost : when we sing, *O how I love thy Law, &c.* Our soules should be even ravisht with holy affections towards the Word, and if we finde not such ardent motions in our spirits , there's a word of admonition, to minde us what we should be. *Psal. 73. 1. Yet God is good to Israel,* &c. In singing this, we learn to act faith as the Psalmist did, and stir up our selves to lay hold on God , especially when we have any temptation to distrust. As in prayer and praise we act faith, and other graces , expresse and shew forth good desires, and other holy affections, so let us in singing of Psalmes. For questionless in this duty we have occasions enough of so doing, whilest such heavenly matter is suggested to us for sweet meditation , and solacing our selves in God and his Word.

Quest. Some may ask, Whether it be not good when we are at our work to sing a Psalm, and so to exercise our hearts in meditation on heavenly things.

Ans. Though I had rather men should
sing

sing a Psalm, than do worse, yet I dare not commend such a practice, nor advise to it, for this reason, *viz.* To sing a Psalm as it ought to be done, is work enough, so as a man need to do nothing else; and if it be said, That this will help us to meditate on something that is good. I answer, That if meditation on some good matter were all the end of singing, this were somewhat, but there is more in the matter; and to say truth, singing a Psalm is such a duty as will require the whole man, there being no good exercise wherein our hearts are more apt to miscarry than in this.

Again, thou must observe and watch in this duty, as in prayer, what answers God gives in to thee, and how thy spirit closes with the heavenly matter that is sung, so as thou art raised, comforted, cheered, confirmed, or humbled. As there is a return of prayers, so of praises too, and in every Duty and Ordinance there is marrow and fatness, if our soules are well disposed to relish and receive it.

In one word, This is an excellent service,

service, and therefore the more difficult, so as thou hast need to keep thy heart with a bridle, as *David* resolved to keep his mouth, *Psal.* 39. 1. or otherwise thou wilt hardly rule it when thou art in this duty.

Some cautious directions in order to a right performance of this duty.

In order to singing with understanding and good affection, I advise all you that can, to look on when you sing. Our practice is (you know) for one to read a line, and then all to sing it, which some quarrell at, and I for my part wish we had no need so to do, for questionless it were farre better if all had books, and could read, or else had learnt the Psalmes by heart, But if singing be a duty, and we cannot do it without this help, I know no reason we have to reject it. They that cannot read themselves, may, and ought to hear others read. Nor is this reading the Psalm an unwarrantable invention of men brought into the Worship of God, as some have said, but onely a necessary help to it, as Pulpits are necessary helps unto the minister in speaking, and so are Galleries

Galleries and Scaffolds to the people in hearing. We must distinguish the immediate spirituall means of Worship from such helps as serve onely more remotely to the sence of hearing. Now our reading the Psalm that is sung, is but onely a remote help to the sence of hearing, which we use onely for necessities sake, because many cannot reade the Psalm themselves. Though I advise and intreat all that can reade, to use their books, and so help their understandings; for when a line onely is read, the sence remains imperfect, whereupon some have thought it better (and I am not against it) that two lines be read together.

2. Again, I do heartily wish, there were some amendment of our English Meetre in two or three particulars. First, that all the Psalmes might run in such Meetre as all our people are able to sing. And secondly, That some uncouth expressions and obsolete words were altered; as for other faults in the Translation, they would be chiefly looked after; though I must profess, I think the faults

faults are not so many or so great as some men would make them. There are, no doubt, but too many things which I stand not to justifie, but wish with all my heart, they were well amended; yet this must be considered, that nothing can be done by men, but it will be imperfect. Their arguing therefore is not so good to my thinking, who will not sing *David's* Psalmes, because of some flaws in the Translation. For my part, I know no Translation of the Bible but hath its mistakes, and I suppose, we all look upon Translations as imperfect, and yet we do not upon that ground refuse to reade the Scriptures. That there are faults I grant, but that they are such as should cause us to forbear singing till they be amended, I deny. Some have not stuck to say, there are lies in our singing Psalmes, but their word is no slander. Though there be mistakes, it will not follow, there are lies. I believe there is no Translation of the Bible but there are some mistakes in it, and yet 'tis foul language to say there are lies. For the mistakes,

mistakes, I heartily wish them amended ; and do much approve of their excellent pains , who have altogether changed our English Meetre ; yet , considering our people have been used to these, I conceive it farre better for the present necessity, to let them alone with some alteration in some things, such as I spake of even now. And if some one that is duly qualified for such a work, would undertake it, I suppose (under favour) it would be an excellent piece of service to the Church of God amongst us, and he should deserve very much at the hands of all devout and godly Christians.

3. Again, there ought to be a choice of Psalmes according as occasion requires, for as they were penned upon occasion, and are some of them intended more especially for one use, and some for another, so there should be a wise choice made of Psalmes to be sung, according as our necessities and occasions respectively call for. The 92. Psalme is intituled a Psalme for the Sabbath ; and if you consider the subject matter of it,
and

and many others that set forth the works of God, they will appear very fit to be sung on the Sabbath day. As the second, and eighth and other Psalmes that speak of the Kingdome of Christ; the 33, 34, and 37, &c. that treat of the work of Creation and Providence; so the 119th Psalm, that shews what is the excellent use of Gods Word, and what affection we should bear towards it. At times of humiliation such Psalmes are to be sung, as may seem to express our sense of sin, our trembling at the wrath of God, or that set forth the calamities and sufferings of Gods people. At times of rejoycing choose such Psalmes as mention the marvellous works of God in Victories, Deliverances, and other mercies shewed unto his people.

If thus there be a wise choice made, I know not any occasion the people of God have at any time, but there may be a Psalm found to answer it; and then if Gods people can with one minde and one mouth glorifie God, what a pleasant and comely thing is it? such a resemblance of heaven, as hardly a better can

can be found upon earth. Onely let our care be, that our hearts be well tuned, for thats it that makes melody in the eares of the Lord. You know, it is not so comely, when in the Congregation some sing out of tune : but the greatest absurdity of all is when our hearts are not in tune. Though (as I have shewed) the impiety and profaneness of some doth not hinder the acceptance of others, yet 'tis more desireable, and that which we should heartily wish, that all could so do this duty, as therein to please God and profit their own soules. Surely if we sing as we ought, somewhat will stick by us. Many sing, and make a noise, and that's all, so they hear and pray to as little purpose, yet others do these duties to their great advantage and edification in grace and gracious practice. If admiring God, speaking good of his Name, rejoycing in his goodness, and other his glorious infinite Excellencies, sweet meditation on the Promises, fervent expression of our good desires, humbling, comforting and chearing our hearts, be good exercises, let us not give
over

over singing, since there is no one Psalm, or part of a Psalm, but will minister occasion of doing one of these. I do the rather perswade to it, because I observe many will not open their mouthes to sing in the Congregation; and most neglect this duty in their families, are not so frequent in it, as Christians were wont to be. And I observe withall, that few thrive well after they once neglect or scruple singing of Psalmes. They begin at this commonly, but seldome end here, but proceed from evill to worse, till they come at last to live above Ordinances and Duties (as they call it) but indeed live without them, and so live like beasts in the shape of men. Let others think as they please, I never knew Christians thrive better in grace and knowledge, than when repeating of Sermons, singing of Psalmes and such like exercises were more in fashion than they have been of late. And let it be considered in what juncture of time singing of Psalmes hath been so much denied and spoken against, even when all the Ordinances of God, and all the Duties of his
Worship

Worship have been as much slighted by too many amongst us. Here (as I said even now) men begin, but seldome or never stay, but go further to question and decry all Ordinances. They begin here (as I conceive) for this reason, because wrangling wits have some more specious and fair pretences, whereby they can more easily entangle simple and unstable soules, and so make them to scruple at this duty sooner than at any other. And to say, as the thing is, The ignorance of most concerning the nature, end, and Use of this Duty, hath given the greatest advantage unto others to seduce and draw them away from it. If that which hath been spoken upon this occasion, may convince or confirm, or direct any, I have my end, and let God have the glory. Only hear what Mr Cotton (a reverend man saith in this case) *It is (saith he) the misery of this present age, that those Ordinances, which men have used either without the knowledge of their true grounds, or without any sense of comfort in & by them, or without love to them, in the hour of temptation they have cast them aside, and so forsaken*
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the holy Institutions of God, to please themselves in their own imaginations.

Suppose the 3^d Psalm is to be sung, what a word of Admonition is there to act faith in a God Almighty, as *David* did, and so to possess our soules in patience, and confident expectation of deliverance in Gods time, and way, though our distress and danger be never so great? If a man have grace in his heart, the singing of that Psalm may provoke, and put him on to offer up the prayer of faith whatever his condition be; And so it is very proper to any good Christians case. And that's the scope of the 4th Psalme, *viz.* to express the confidence that *David* had in God, when he lay under the hard, and heavy hands of cruel enemies, who insulted over him. Why may not any good Christian, in singing that Psalme, act faith, as *David* did? However he may learn his duty, and what he ought to do, when there is the like occasion. Besides; there is a word of Admonition, not to look after comfort in any creature, but to preferre the light of Gods countenance
above

above all worldly accommodations, though in never so great abundance.

If we would rejoyce in the Lord, notwithstanding the insolency and outrage of cruell enemies, and encourage our hearts to expect an end of them, and all their wicked designs, and devices, how pertinent is the 9th Psalm? And suppose we are not in such a sad condition, yet it is (I hope) no hurt for us to meditate on such matter, thereby to furnish our selves with provision against a time of need. Sure I am, we read many Psalmes, and other portions of Scripture, that, out of them we may gather and lay up somewhat in store for our selves against a time of need, if there were no more. But there is more in the matter, than so, as hath been shewed in the foregoing Sermons.

What singular expressions of our desires have we in the tenth Psalm, when we have occasion to bewail the miseries, and sufferings of Gods people through the craft and crueltie of unreasonable, and wicked men? And when have not Gods people occasion so to do?

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The eleventh psalme is nothing else but a profession of *David's* confidence in God, and his taking comfort thereupon, when there was no help, nor any hope of it from men, but, as he there saith, *v. 3. All the foundations are destroyed, and what can the righteous do?*

Is there not much to be learnt from the 14th Psalme, concerning the folly, and madness of prophane ones, that fear not God, and regard not men? As also concerning Gods watchfull eye observing all their wayes, and doings, when they go on to vex, and oppress his people against the light of conscience shining within them? And yet there is more to be learnt from it concerning the sad, and miserable condition, wherein all men are by nature, and the only means of their deliverance. How usefull is it to meditate on the blessedness of such as are true Citizens of Zion, which we may do in singing the 15th Psalme, and so learn what manner of men we ought to be in all conversation, and godliness, as ever we hope to enjoy communion.

with the Lord both here, and hereafter ? What a lively description of Christ's death, and resurrection have we in the sixteenth Psalm, wherein the Lord professeth his delight in the Saints on earth, as his portion, and the lot of his inheritance, and proclaims to all the world, that idolaters, and all despisers of his grace have no part, nor lot in the precious fruits, and benefits of his death, and resurrection. Doth it not become Christians to sing that Psalm, & so to rejoyce in the glorious conquest of Christ over death, and the grave, by vertue whereof they have cause to triumph ? as the Apostle directs them, *1 Corinth. 15. 55.*

Or is there any thing that can minister occasion of rejoycing in God more than the glorious victory we have in Christ Jesus over all our spirituall enemies ? When I consider these things, I cannot sufficiently wonder at the peevishness of some people, quarrelling (as they do) at the singing of this, or other the like Psalmes, which is in effect to say, they would not have Christians to
rejoyce

rejoyce in Gods salvation. Sure I am, that very many of *David's* Psalmes set forth the glory of Christs Kingdome, and the beauty of his grace, and providence in the administration of it, as whosoever hath any sence of such spirituall things, cannot but be ravished with the meditation and the remembrance of them.

I may perhaps weary some Readers with so many particular instances; However for the satisfaction of others, I shall crave leave to adde a few more.

The 17th Psalme was penned (as it is probable) upon occasion of *David's* persecution by *Saul*. Now though we are not in the same condition, yet we may be in somewhat a like case. Or if not so, yet we may sing it to very good purpose, whilst we thereby take occasion to consider that our innocency, and uprightness is a singular argument of consolation in times of affliction, that when we are under any sufferings, our greatest care must be to keep our selves from sinning, and that the comfort of the godly arising from the sence of Gods

favour, and gracious presence is better by farre, and rather to be chosen, than the present condition of wicked men flourishing in all worldly wealth, and having more than heart can wish. The Eighteenth Psalm teacheth us, that God alone is to be acknowledged, and honoured in all our mercies, and particularly in deliverances from enemies, or any dangers. It sets forth the condition of Gods people in all ages, both as to their sufferings, and their safetie, and gives us fit occasion of meditating on the glorious victories of the Lord Jesus, of whom *David* was a type in all his sufferings, and the glory that followed after them.

The Nineteenth Psalm shews that however the glory of God is to be seen in his works, yet his Word is that which makes us wise unto salvation, and that this word of God is so perfect, as by comparing our lives and conversations with it, we have cause to bewail our many infirmities, and with all earnestness, and fervencie of spirit, to beg grace, and strength of God against
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the grossest evils, since we have that corruption within us, which inclines us to them, and not onely to pray against great transgressions, and presumptuous sinnes, but against the least motions and workings of sin, whether in word or thought.

The Twentieth Psalme teacheth the duty of people towards their godly, lawfull Magistrates, and Governours, and though it were penned upon a particular occasion (probably, when *David* went forth against the *Ammonites*, 2 *Sam.* 10.) yet it hath this Doctrine of generall concernment, *viſ.* That Godly Christian Rulers, who are nursing fathers to the Church of God, ought to be remembered in our prayers for a blessing upon their designs, and endeavours for Gods people, and against his and their enemies. It teacheth likewise, that *it is Gods blessing alone that keeps the City*; as we have it in another Psalme *Psal.* 127.

The 21. Psalme shews likewise, that the safety of the Church, and of all Christian States depends on God alone, and gives us also occasion of admiring the glory of Christs Kingdome,

which is so great through Gods salvation, seeing *David*, in his kingdome over *Israel*, was a Type of Christ reigning in his Church, and so also the passages in *David's* Psalmes that respect his rule, and government, have an aim at somewhat answerable to the Kingdome of Christ.

What more comfortable Consideration can any poor soul have than the subject matter of the 24th Psalm, wherein the Question is resolved, Whether God have any peculiar company divided from the rest of the world, of which he is more especialiy tender and carefull, and where this company is, and what manner of men they are, who (as I may say) are the fellows of this society. Here we may learn, that God hath a Church on earth, call'd out of the world, and distinguished from it, that not hypocrites, and formall Professors, but hearty, and upright Christians onely communicate in the spirituall and everlasting blessings which God poureth upon the Church, and that all, even the greatest, are invited and called upon to enter into this society

cietie of Gods people, out of which there is no salvation.

The 25th Psalme was penned when *David* was in great distress, and is an eminent testimony of his faith in God, which he expresseth in his earnest prayer, unto which he encourageth himself by the consideration of Gods faithfulness in his Promises, and in all his wayes of Providence; more especially, in that he manifests himself to his people, in the guidance, and government of his good Spirit, that they may not mistake, and so miscarry in their Christian race. Now what can be more sweet to any pious soul, than the serious consideration of such gracious and mercifull dealing of God with his people? Or how can such a soul chuse but be much enlarged towards the Lord, when it meditates, as it ought, upon such things as these?

Would a Christian express his integrity, and innocency, and resolution to cleave close to God in wayes of holiness, & righteousness, however he be defamed in the world, or whatever else befalls him, how pertinent is the 26th Psalme.

The 27th Psalm teacheth us wherein lieth a Christians safetie, peace, comfort, and all, *vi*z. in Gods protection, and gracious Providence over him. It teacheth also, what must be a Christians chiefest care in all estates, and conditions, *vi*z. that he may continue and abide in the sincere Profession of the truth, and the faithfull service of God according to his will, and so to comfort himself, and encourage his heart, till God be pleased to come in with deliverance.

The 28th Psalm (to say no more of it) may teach us, That God alone is to be prayed unto in all dangers, and he alone to be praised for all deliverances : And also, that in all our addressees to God, we are more especially to commend unto him the safetie, and enlargement of his Church.

May we not sing the 29th Psalm with much comfort, and spirituall benefit, if we set our selves to meditate on the matter, scope, and drift of it, which is, to invite all to lay aside carnall confidence in wealth, strength, wisdom, or any such like things, and to submit themselves

themselves to the rule, and government of God Almighty, who doth wonderfull things in the world, shews his glory in the thunder of his power, to make all creatures, even the dead, and dumbe, in a manner, to stand in awe of him, and by all these terrible doings of his, teaches his own people the more to trust him, who is so able to preserve them, and destroy all his, and their enemies with the least blast of the breath of his nostrills :

If we sing the Thirtieth Psalme, we may see the frame of our own spirits in that of *David's*, who was as much cast down in adversity, as he was before lifted up in prosperity, and how easie a matter it is for God to make sudden changes, as to our outward estates, so to our inward also, and that, whatsoever changes pass upon Gods people, he can easily and suddenly change all their mourning into mirth, and so give them matter of rejoycing in his salvation.

In the One and Thirtieth Psalme *David* teacheth us from his own experience, that there is an inexhaustible store of all

good laid up with God for all that trust in him, yea, and that notwithstanding our infirmitie and diffidence, God of his meer faithfulness will deliver us in his appointed time. There also we may learn, that though Gods people be many times low in their own apprehensions by reason of many and great dangers, yet so long as their eyes and their hearts are towards the Lord, as *David's* were, they may comfortably expect a good issue at last, and thereupon are to encourage themselves, and pluck up their spirits, as they are exhorted to do in the last Verse of that Psalm.

The 32^d Psalm teacheth us wherein lieth true blessedness, *viz.* in the pardon of sin, and that we can never attain to assurance of that pardon, and peace arising from it, till we come freely off from sin, and so are farre from guile in our spirits, as *David* was at last after much adoe. It teacheth us also in what way we must come to God, and that is, in a way of true humiliation, and hearty confession.

feſſion of ſin, and that all ſuch humble penitents have matter of rejoycing, when impenitent, and hardened rebels ſhall have ſorrow enough.

How can we admire Gods gracious diſpenſations towards his Iſrael better, than by an affectionate ſinging the Thirty third, Thirty forth, and Thirty ſeventh Pſalmes, which ſet forth in moſt ample manner the goodneſs of God towards his own, and his juſt indignation againſt all his, and their enemies, though for the preſent, it is not eaſie for us to apprehend the righteouſneſs of God, in his dealings with the one, and the other? And have not Gods people alwaies occaſion from Gods dayly Providences to ſing ſuch Pſalmes as thoſe, that ſo they may confirm their hearts in confidence on God, and comfortable expectations from him, though for the preſent they are in heavineſs through manifold temptations?

Thou mayeſt ſing the 35th Pſalme, and conſider what uſage Gods people have in the world from wicked men, and what courſe they muſt take to rid
themyſelves.

themselves of them, *viz.* to complain to God, and so engage all the power that is in heaven, against them.

The 36th Psalm teacheth us to oppose, and set the gracious dispensations of God towards his people (who walke in the light of the Lord, and are fed with the fatness of his house) against the sense of wicked mens prosperitie, that makes them not to fear God, and puts them on to devise evill against his people, because it is in the power of their hand to do it.

We may sing the 38th Psalm, and consider what sufferings come upon Gods own people for sin, and so help to move, and cause our bowells of compassion towards the distressed Churches of God in the world. We may also take occasion to consider that our sufferings are the fruits of our sins, and so labour to quiet and patient our spirits, as *David* did, by faith, and fervent prayer, as you may see in the 15, 21, and 22th Verses of that Psalm.

In singing the 39th Psalm we may learn, that it is through infirmitie of
the

the flesh, that good men (such as *David*) are so apt to repine at the present dispensations of divine Providence, That good men (such as *David*) may be overcome by such a temptation, notwithstanding all their purposes, and resolutions to the contrary, and that good, and godly men will bestirre themselves, and strive to act faith in fervent prayers to God for deliverance out of their present troubles, and for support under them.

The 40th Psalme acquaints us with *David's* experiences, how God had answered him in his desires, and wrought wonderfully for his deliverance. It gives us also to understand, how sensible he was of those many and great obligations which God had layed upon him by his loving-kindness, and how resolved he was to give a reall testimimony, as long as he lived, of his thankfulness, by declaring to others the goodness of God.

And, because he knew that troubles and dangers did still abide him, he commends himself by prayer to the direction, and defence of God Almighty,
and

and that, not only for his own safetie, and preservation, but that others might be confirmed in faith, and so have occasion also to shew forth the praises of the Lord. We have also in this Psalm an instruction concerning the true worship of God, that it consisteth especially in sincere obedience to the will of God, and besides all this, applying some passages out of the Sixth, seventh, and eight Verses, to the Apostle to the *Hebrews*, Chap. 10. the obedience of Christ, in performing all the will of God, for the reconciling of the world, we may hence confirme our faith, in assurance that the work of Redemption is perfectly accomplished, according to the will, and counsell of God, who was not pleased with sacrifices, but in the obedience of his well beloved Son, *Isa. 42. 1. Mat. 3. 17.*

The One and fourtieth Psalm instructeth us concerning the perfidious baseness of wicked and worldly men, who are apt to insult over Gods servants, when they lie under the afflicting hand of God, It teacheth us also,
how

how to judge of good mens sufferings, and not to conclude them therefore to be forsaken of God, and utterly cast off, and moreover we may hence learn, when we finde most deceit, and falshood in men, to fix our hearts on God by faith, expecting deliverance according to his truth, and faithfulness.

In the Two and fourtieth Psalme we may see how *David* is almost overwhelmed with many and great calamities, that followed one upon another, as the waves of the sea, one no sooner past, but another comes, and yet how he bears himself up by acting faith to lay hold on God, and checking himself for his distrust, and dejection of spirit. Now it concerns (as I take it) every Christian, to make *David's* practice his Precedent in the same, or in the like case. Gods people have their fears, and doubts, as he had, and may as truly and justly say, many times, as he did, *Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me?* Sure I am, there is no childe of God, but is much

much affected with holy desires towards the house of God, and accounts the want of publick Ordinances a great affliction, especially, when wicked men reproach them, and insult over them for the loss of those opportunities which once they enjoyed.

The 43^d Psalm was penned upon the same occasion, and (as it seems) near about the same time; and the scope of it is to beg of God that he may be again restored to the enjoyment of those former mercies, and to encourage himself to a confident expectation of them in Gods good time.

The 44th Psalm sets forth the condition of Gods people suffering many times for conscience sake, and because they dare not defile themselves, as the wicked world would have them. It furnisheth us with many Arguments wherewith to plead with God, in the behalf of his people, when they are in such a sad, and suffering condition. I need say no more, since no good Christian can chuse but see what use may be made of the Doctrine of this Psalm,

Pfalme, as long as God hath a people upon earth to serve him.

In the 45th Psalme we may behold the King (Jesus Christ) in his beauty, and the Church, his royall spouse, most excellently adorned with those admirable perfections which he hath indowed her withall. Sure there are most glorious things spoken both of Christ, and the Church, and therefore Christians may sing that Psalm in way of holy rejoycing, and thanksgiving.

The 46th Psalme was pointed at in one of the Sermons before, and there-upon I shall not so much as touch with it now.

When Gods people did so rejoyce, because the glory of the Lord, and his salvation should be revealed, and made known amongst all nations, have not we Christians more cause than ever they had, to rejoyce in God, upon this account, and so to sing the 47th Psalme? specially since we believe, and expect that God will, e're long, bring in the Nations to Jesus Christ, so as hitherto he hath not brought them in.

The

The Fourty eighth Psalm being in a manner of the same argument with the Fourty sixth, I need say nothing of it.

The Scope, and drift of the Fourty ninth Psalm, being the same with that of the 37th, and 73^d, and many others, I shall not say much of it. Onely the Doctrine of it is of singular use to all Gods people, that they may not be discouraged at the present flourishing condition of worldly and wicked men.

The Fiftieth Psalm disclaimes all the Ceremonious observances of false-hearted hypocrites, and shews what is the onely acceptable way of serving God. Now I need not tell any godly Christians, what need the best of us have of such meditations and Instructions.

I suppose, there are but few Christians who have not occasion to bewail their sinnes, and to beg pardoning and purging grace (as *David* did) of God, in the One and fiftieth Psalm, and although every ones case be not the same in every respect, as *David's* was, yet he is very much a stranger to his own heart, and
spirituall

spirituall estate, that doth not see cause enough to apply unto himself every passage of that Psalme.

For the Two and fiftieth Psalme, although it were penned upon occasion of *Doeg's* malicious, and murderous practices, yet it ministers matter for our faith to work upon, so as we may take comfort in God, when we are in any trouble and perill, upon the same grounds as *David* there doth, *viz.* because the goodness of God endureth for ever, and all the people of God shall flourish and grow fresh again, when all the ungodly shall perish.

The Fifty fourth Psalme penned upon occasion of some danger that *David* was in (as the Title of it shews) teacheth us whether to fly for help in time of need, and what an happy issue we may expect whilest we can live by faith in God, as *David* did, even in the midst of troubles.

The Fifty fifth Psalme shews the necessities, and distresses that Gods servants are many times brought into, partly by the falsehood of seeming friends, and partly,

partly, by the cruelty of enraged enemies, and how, notwithstanding the one and the other, they may by the prayer of faith prevail with God, both for their enemies destruction, and their own deliverance. None therefore need to scruple the singing of this Psalm, but such as fear not God, because they have not changes, *ver. 19.* Sure the matter of it will sute with the necessities, and occasions of Gods people, for the most part of them, and at most times.

I should quite tire the Readers patience, to run through every particular Psalm: I have instanced in so many, as by them, whoever is willing, and hath any understanding, may judge of all the rest, how properly, and pertinently any of them may be sung, specially if there be (as there ought) a wise accommodation of them unto the severall respective occasions, and conditions of the Church, and people of God. I shall adde this one word more,

That singing of Psalmes is in order to our edification, and furtherance in grace and gracious practice, as all other duties
of

of Gods worship are; That we may know more of the minde of God, be more inclined to do his will, and act faith, and all other graces with more vigor, and life, and faithfulness, & fervency of spirit. Now, if hearing, reading, praying, communicating at the Lords Table be usefull for those ends, why not also singing of Psalmes? specially, since in that duty (done as it ought to be) there is so great an advantage by serious meditation on those precious truths, to act our graces, to admonish our selves of our duties, to encourage our selves against all dangers, and difficulties, and to expresse those high thoughts we are to have of God according to his infinite excellencies. Surely then, if ever, are the high praises of God in the mouths of his Saints, when their tongues are singing and sounding out those great, and glorious things which God hath both spoken, and done in order to their salvation. Wherefore I am bold to conclude, that, the duty is most usefull; and excellent, and no Christ an hath any cause to complain, except of his own unaptness, and inability to do it, as it ought to be done.

And

And now I do again most earnestly and heartily beseech, and exhort all sober, and godly Christians to consider seriously, and sadly of the Premisses. Is it nothing to neglect a duty, so plainly, and so particularly enjoined, and prescribed as this is? Yea, to persist in that neglect, and justify it? Consider, I beseech you, who they were that first began to question, and decry this Christian exercise: Consider too, how far many of them are since fallen, not onely from this, but from all other duties of Religious Worship. Had they ended where they began, you might haply have had some more probable pretence for the neglect of this duty, whilst their constancy in other duties of Gods worship and service had pleaded for them, that they intended, and desired to lay aside onely what was at least more questionable. But they have proceeded (you know) to lay down all hearing and praying, and all outward acts of worship, as well as singing of Psalmes. I say not, that all, and every one have done so already, but many ('tis sad to think how

how many) have renounced all Ordinances , and wayes of Worship wherein Gods people were wont to wait upon God , and pretend to no way of knowing Gods minde, but that of immediate, and extraordinary Revelation. And not so content , they labour, what in them lieth , to perswade others to the same course with themselves. I shewed formerly , why they began here : Now I intreat you to consider, that they who began here , knew not where to end, till they came to a professed rejection of all Ordinances. By this you may see (if there were nothing else) what manner of men they were that first perswaded to a neglect of this duty. Surely they that set them on work , were such as liked not the wayes of worship wherein we had walked with God , since he was pleased to take off from our necks the yoke of *Romish* Superstition, and Idolatry. Need we question it , when so many printed Pamphlets have flown abroad, to possess the people , that our Churches Ministers are all false , yea, that our
Worship

Worship used in our assemblies is all false. What is the meaning (think you) of this? Can it be any other, than to insinuate, that we have been a long while out of the right way, and that now, (and not before, for these many yeares) is brought to light, the onely true way of worshipping God. And what must this more excellent way be, but that which Gods people formerly departed from, when they made a separation from Rome? I commend their wit, they play their game very handsomely: But I hope, such as have grace, will be wiser than to hearken to such charmers, which have already enchanted so many unlearned, and unstable soules, to an utter forsaking of our Assemblies, and casting off all Duties, and Ordinances, though (as I said) they began at first with slighting that most excellent duty of singing *David's Psalmes*.

And now, Christian Reader, thou art desired to trouble thy thoughts no more, whether thou shalt sing; But rather to set thy self to a serious, and
sincere

sincere performance of this duty. And that for this reason : because there is ground enough of fear , least , as the serpent beguiled *Eve* through his subtilty , so thy minde should by little and little be corrupted to cast away all the Ordinances which Jesus Christ hath instituted for this end , that by the use of them thou mayest be edified in grace , and gracious practice. And what if God should so farre leave thee , as he hath left some ? Know that men who dwell in fleshly Tabernacles cannot hold communion with God (without the help of Ordinances) whatever some for the present, deluded by Satan, and vainly puffed up by their fleshly mindes , may pretend. What a temptation dost thou lay upon thy self by leaving one Christian exercise to cast off others , and at last , all ? And then what a temptation will there lie upon thee , to close with any wayes of Will-worship , when once thou hast cast off those wherein thou wast wont to walk with God ? I shall argue no further , but desire thee to consider,

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what hath been said, and pray the Lord to give thee understanding in all these things. For certainly we have all need of it, that Satan, (who now appeares, as an Angel of light in his Instruments) may not circumvent us.

Consider what I have said, and the Lord give you understanding in all things.

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